

MORAL ESSAYS,

Contain'd in several

TREATISES

ON

Many Important DUTIES.

Written in *French*, by

Messieurs du Port Royal.

Faithfully Rendred into *English*, by

A Person of Quality.

First Volume.

L O N D O N

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FOR ALL ESSAYS

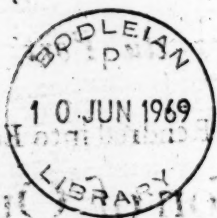
CONTAINED IN

THE REVIEWS

ON

THE HISTORY OF THE

REIGN OF



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REIGN OF

THE VOLUME

OF THE

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Nothing shall be here said of the Prospect the Author had in his Eye, when he made these Treatises; nor of the Reasons he has at present to publish them, nor of what extent the matter is which he design'd to comprehend under the Title he hath given them. It is well known, the World cares little to be inform'd of these Particulars, and that having no interest but in the Work it self, it will judge thereof by its true intrinsick worth, not by these outward and forrein circumstances.

We will therefore content our selves in giving some advice touching the Book it self, and the first shall be of its Title, Moral Essays. It would be a mistake to conclude that nothing was pretended to be herein propos'd, but some uncertain and confus'd Glimpses, or slight Ideas of Christian Perfection. On the contrary, some of these Treatises give a Prospect fair enough; and there is none of them that does not contain Truths most solid, and of the greatest importance.

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The reason then of making choice of this Title has been, That Christian Morality appearing to be of too vast an extent, to be all entirely here treated of, and the enterprize too great to reduce into one Body that diversity of Principles it contains, and those many Devoirs depending thereon: It has been thought better to Essay to Treat it by Parts, now applying ones self to the consideration of one duty, now of another; whilst it has been thought sufficient, on the peculiar matters here handled, to advance several Truths as they have offer'd themselves, without undergoing the trouble of disposing and ordering them according to Method. And this is what is mark'd out by the word Essays.

Perhaps this way of writing has been chosen for its easiness. Yet true it is, that this disorder wants not its advantages, and those no inconsiderable ones. For if we take notice there is a necessity of filling Methodical Works with an infinite number of things, which have no other benefit, than that of their being requisite to Order; and to leave out others of great use, for this only reason that they cannot handsomly take place in the prescribed Method.

The necessity which one obliges himself to of tying and connecting together former thoughts, to those that follow, brings in another

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ther, of admitting many common trivial ones, which are not taken up by choice or inclination, and which are of no other use than to fill up certain gaps and void places, and to tie and knit together the several parts of the discourse. So that in pieces exactly methodical, many things are said against ones mind, and others omitted which one would have said.

Not that I pretend to equalize Writings compos'd of thoughts, having no connection one with another, to Treatises that are coherent and methodical. No, I only pretend to conclude, that a Piece is not altogether to be slighted, though the parts whereof it is compos'd be not rang'd in so exact an order, or so neatly jointed one with another: And Experience makes out the Truth which I advance; from divers Writings of this kind, which have had great vogue and esteem.

But if so precise an order be not to be sought for in each particular Treatise of this Volume; it ought with less reason to be expected in the disposition they have amongst themselves; which is arbitrary enough. Nevertheless, as Order and Method are of several kinds, and that there are few things where some order may not be imagin'd; the following considerations may give a Reason plausible enough of the disposition of these Treatises.

Advertisement.

The first duty of Man is to know himself; and to know himself is to be fully acquainted with his own corruption and weakness. To teach this is the subject of the First Treatise; Of the Weakness of Man.

But we ought not to stop here; having known our selves, we must endeavour to know God; not by a Knowledge Barren and Philosophical, but Beneficial and Christian; by a Knowledge which may be a Light to guide our steps in this life, and bring us to the end we aim at. And this is the proper drift of the Second Treatise; Of Submission to the Will of God: Which contains the Principles of all those duties we are obliged to, during the course of our life; since there are none which are not in this double contemplation of Gods Will, consider'd on one side as the rule of our actions, on the other as the cause of whatsoever happens.

Had not Man been corrupted, almost no other instructions than this had been needful; all Christian Justice consisting in knowing and performing the Will of God. But, as there are many things that weaken in the Just, resolutions they have made of obeying God, and preferring him before all things else; they ought to use many means to maintain and strengthen themselves in their good resolves. The most common, most efficacious,
most

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most authoriz'd by Scripture, and the Examples of Saints, are those of Fear, the subject of the Third Treatise; in which are particularly consider'd the Reasons that even the Just have to live in a continual dread of God Almighty.

The Three first Treatises look directly only at the interior duties of Man, with relation either to God or to himself: But since God hath oblig'd the greatest portion of Mankind to a life of commerce with others, and that Salvation ordinarily depends on their conduct herein; it is needful to foresee the principal errors we, for the most part commit in treating with others, and to consider the means how to shun them. And this has been endeavour'd to be done in the Treatise which has for Title, Of the means to conserve Peace amongst Men.

Lastly, having given several useful Advertisements for conserving Peace; it was thought convenient to look up towards the Fountain-head of all divisions, in the Treatise of Rash Judgments, where endeavours are us'd to regulate the mind in the Judgments it makes of Man, and all other things, and to inspire the love of Truth and Justice, and the hatred of a certain rash presumption, which in the World gives sentence of an infinite number of things.

Perhaps

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Perhaps these Two last Treatises may seem to some fill'd with a number of observations too little, too particular, and too common: But perhaps also there will be found some who may reap so much the more profit out of this minute handling these matters, as by experience they shall know that the most part of discourses made in general, are of little use, since either for want of sincerity or knowledge there is almost no body found who applies them home to himself. So that to oblige Men to reflect on their faults and duties, there is a necessity of particularizing them in the most plain and simple manner that can be. Nor ought one to be reserved in this particular out of fear, lest the things propos'd should prove little and trivial. Here in the *World* all things are mean and little, through the meanness of the end all our actions tend to: In Religion all is great through the greatness of that it proposes to it self. Moreover, those who know in what Christian Virtue consists, are not ignorant, that it shews it self in nothing more than in regulating Men in their particular life, and ordinary actions. The occasions of doing great things are rare, and the Grace to perform them faithfully is not to be obtain'd but by that attention and care which every one shall have to acquit himself of those common duties which compose the body of our actions and life.

There

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There only remains to advertise, that it may be observ'd in some places (which are very few) certain thoughts have been borrow'd from Books publish'd; viz. From the Thoughts of Mr. Paschal; the Art of Thinking, and the Education of a Prince. Since these are become publick, it was believ'd one might, by that right the publick has there to them, make this use of them, and that no body could blame this procedure, whilst by this sincere acknowledgement Justice was done their Authors.

Perhaps the Treatise of the Education of a Prince may become one Volume of these Moral Essays; its author having acknowledged, that he could have wish'd it might from the beginning have born that Title: Since the Treatises whereof it is compos'd are fit to make part of the design of these Essays, and that he gave his consent it should for the future be look'd on as one of the Volumes of this Piece.



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T A B L E
O F

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MORAL



MORAL ESSAYS.

First Treatise.

Of the weakness of Man.

Miserere mei Domine, quoniam infirmus sum.

I.

PRide is a swelling of the heart, by which man dilates and magnifies himself in his own imagination; and the Idea, or conceit of our selves it imprints in us, is an Idea of strength, of greatness, and of excellence. 'Tis upon this score Riches puff us up; for they give us occasion to esteem our selves as mighty and great. We look upon them according to the expression of
B the

the wise man, as a strong hold sheltering us from the injuries of Fortune, and enabling us to Lord it over others: *Substantia divitis Urbs roboris ejus*. And hence springs that inward haughtiness, which is, according to St. *Augustine*, the worm of Riches.

II.

The Pride of the Great, is of the same nature with that of the Rich, and, like it, consists in the Idea they have of their own strength. Now, whereas, should they consider themselves alone, they could not find in themselves wherewith to frame this conceit: their custom is, to add to their own being whatever belongs to, or hath any connexion with themselves. A great man, in the Idea he frames of himself, is not one single man alone, but a man made up of all those, who depend on him; and he imagines himself to have as many hands as they altogether have, because all theirs are at his dispose, and move at his pleasure. A General of an Army always looks on himself as in the midst of his Souldiers. Thus it is that every one endeavours to fill as much room as he can in his own thoughts; and it is but to augment and magnifie the Idea every one there frames of himself, that we press forward, and strive

Of the Weakness of Man. 3

strive to grow great in the world! 'Tis the end of the designs of all ambitious men; nor had *Alexander* and *Cesar* any other in all the battels they fought. If one should ask why the *Grand Seignieur* lately caus'd the death of a hundred thousand men in *Candia*, with confidence one may answer, that it was onely to add to the pourtraiture which he had drawn of himself in his own mind, the title of Conqueror.

III.

This it is, that hath brought forth all those haughty titles, which dayly increase, as this inward pride grows more exorbitant, or less disguis'd. I fancy that he who first took the stile of *High and Mighty Lord*, look'd on himself as rais'd above the heads of his Vassals; and this it was he would make known by this Epithete of *High*, so little agreeable to the low lines of man. The Eastern much out-goes our European World, in the numerousness of titles, being much more foolishly vain. Entire pages are requir'd to contain those of the least of your Indian Kings; because there they set down the number of their Elephants, Revenues, and Jewels, all which compose that imaginary being, which is the Object of their Vanity.

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IV.

Perhaps also what makes us desire with so much passion the approbation of others, is that hereby we are settl'd and fortifi'd in the Idea we have of our own Excellence: for, this publick testimony gives us an assurance thereof; our approbators being as many witnesses, perswading us we are not mistaken in the opinion we have of our selves.

V.

Pride growing from Spiritual Endowments, is of the same kind with that grounded on outward advantages; and, like it, consists in an Idea representing us to our own eyes as great, and making us judge our selves worthy to be esteem'd, preferred, and respected: whether this Pride spring from some quality we distinctly know in us, or from a confus'd image of some excellence and grandeur we attribute to our selves.

VI.

From this Idea also rises the pleasure or disgust we take in many little things; which either please or check us, without determining the reason on the sudden. We take pleasure to win at all games whatsoever, even without any spice of covetousness; and we are displeas'd when we loose:
and

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and why? when we loose we look upon our selves as unfortunate, which implies an Idea of weakness and misery; when we win, we seem happy, and this represents to our minds an Idea of strength, and makes us take our selves for fortunes Favourites. 'Tis with pleasure we talk of sicknesses and dangers we have run through, for thus we appear to our selves, either to have been Gods particular charge, or else to have us'd much courage and much address in overcoming those evils incident to humane life.

VII.

If therefore our Pride proceed from the Idea we have of our own strength and our own excellence; the best means of establishing the contrary virtue of humility, will be to convince us of our own weakness. The tumor must be lanc'd, to give vent to the wind that swells it up. We must undeceive and free our selves from those false lights by which we appear in our own Eyes Great; by placing before them our own littleness and infirmities: yet not so as to discourage and reduce our selves to despair; but to the end we may be press'd on to search for, in God, that help, that succour, that greatness and strength which we cannot find in our own being, no nor in whatever else is join'd thereunto.

VIII.

But special care is to be had, least in doing this we tread in the steps of some Writers, who, under colour of humbling and bringing down the pride of man, have endeavor'd to reduce his nature to the condition of Beasts; being hurri'd to the extravagance of maintaiuing it to have no advantages over that of theirs. 'Tis true these discourses produce an effect quite opposite to what they pretend; and are justly esteem'd rather as disports of Wits, then reasonings of serious persons. Man hath within him a knowledge so clear, so lively, of his pre-eminence above Beasts, that it is a vanity to pretend to obscure it by little quirks, and little idle false stories. All that truth it self can do, is to teach us humility, and often we find but too many evasions to elude its arguments, how lively and pressing soever. What can we then expect from these little reasonings, whose falsity we sufficiently know from a bosom-witness we cannot silence.

IX.

It is to be fear'd these discourses, instead of coming from a sincere acknowledgement of mans baseness, and a desire of humbling his pride, on the contrary proceed from

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from a secret vanity, or a taint in nature of a yet deeper malignancy. For there are some, who, desiring to live like Beasts, find nothing much humbling in those opinions by which they are made like to them; nay, they find a secret comfort: for they grow less ashamed of their irregular ways, which thus appear more conformable to nature. Moreover they are glad to bring down, and least with themselves those whose lustre and greatness dazzle them: little care they to be of the same nature with Brutes, so they place but in the same rank Kings and Princes, Wise men and Philosophers.

X.

Let us not then lose time in sifting these idle Fancies for proofs of our weakness, since we have so many true and real ones of it our selves: for this we need but take a view of our Bodies and Souls; yet not such a superficial and deceitful one, as, concealing what pleases not, shall only set before our eyes what we have a mind to see. No, this view must be a full distinct and sincere one, a view making us appear such as really we are; acquainting us with what we truly have of weakness and strength, of contemptible, and great.

XI.

Looking then on man afar off, we presently perceive a Soul and Body fasten'd and ty'd together by an unknown, nay, incomprehensible knot; by which it comes to pass that the impressions of the Body affect the Soul, and those of the Soul work on the Body: whilst not one is able to conceive the reason or ways of this communication betwixt natures so much differing. After this, approaching nearer to take a more distinct survey of these differing Parts, We find the body to be a Machine compos'd of innumerable Pipes and Springs, fitted to produce infinite diversity of actions and motions, whether for the conservation of this machine, or for other intents to which they are directed: That the Soul is an intelligent being, capable of good or evil, of happiness or misery: That there are certain actions of this Machine of our Body that depend not on the Soul, and that there are others which need the concurrence of her will, and which would not be without it; and that even of these actions some are necessary for preserving this Machine, as eating and drinking; others for other purposes.

XII.

This Machine, though so closely united to a Soul, is neither immortal nor free from being disorder'd or discompos'd: On the contrary, its disposition is such, that it can last but a certain number of years, and in it self carries the causes of its own ruine and destruction; nay, often it is spoil'd and broken in pieces in a very short time. It is subject, even whilst it subsists, to an infinite of painful discomposures, which we call diseases. Physicians in vain have attempted to give us an exact catalogue of them; they are more than they can know: it being impossible this innumerable multitude of springs and small pipes, conveying to and again the humors and spirits of the Body, should subsist almost without some disorder. But, which is more grievous, this disorder stays not in the Body, it seizes on the mind, afflicts it, disquiets it, and is the cause of its pain and sadness.

XIII.

Man hath a power to move certain parts of this his Machine, which are at the beck of his will, and, by the motion of it, to stir and move some adjacent bodies, according to the degree of his strength. This strength is somewhat greater in one, than another;

but very inconsiderable in all: so that to bring about any work of moment, he is forced to make use of those great motions he finds in nature, to wit, of Water, Air, and Fire. Thus his own weakness is supply'd, and thus he can bring to pass many things, which by himself he could not compass; but, after all this, all he can do is very inconsiderable; and it is by taking a view of Man, assisted with all those helps his industry borrows from other bodies, we shall make it appear, that the vanity he draws from his power and strength, is very ill grounded.

XIV.

What gives birth to, and fosters up in man this proud conceit, is, that self-love does so shut and lock him up in himself, that amongst the innumerable things in the universe, he only considers those that have some relation to, or connexion with himself, to him his life in some sort is an Eternity; for he little regards what either went before, or shall come after; and he makes a World of that little sphere of Creatures invironing him, having an influence on him, or on which he can act: and according to the place and room he allots himself in this little world, it is, that he frames this advantageous Idea of his own greatness,

XV.

Of the Weakness of Man. II

XV.

To dispell this error we are so naturally prone to, seems the reason why God Almighty, having a design to humble *Job* under his supreme Majesty, makes him as it were to come out of himself, and go abroad into the wide world, to contemplate it, and the things wherewith it is replenished; to the end, that setting before his eyes how many beings and effects there are, surpassing, not onely his strength, but his understanding; he may thereby convince him of his impotences and weakness. And to speak truth, what is there fitter to destroy that false Idea man frames of the greatness of his own being, whilst he compares himself only with himself, and other men like himself, then to oblige him to contemplate all the other Creatures; and to consider what they discover to us of the infinite greatness of God Almighty. The greater and more powerful God shall appear to our eyes, the less and feebler shall we find our selves; and it is during the time we lose sight of his infinite greatness, that we esteem our selves something.

XVI.

To prosecute therefore this hint the Scripture hath given us, let every one consider

sider that infinite duration that is already gone, and will hereafter follow; and finding his life shut up betwixt these two, let him take notice what part it fills thereof. Let him ask himself this question, why he began to appear rather at this than another instant of this Eternity? and whether he perceive in himself a power either to give or conserve his own being? Let him put to himself the same *quere* about extension or space; let him cast the eyes of his mind on that immensity of bodies, where even his imagination can find no limits: let him reflect on that vast extent of matter his senses discover; in comparison of which, let him consider what is sals to his share; I mean that portion of matter whereof his body is made: let him view well what it is, and what place it fills in the Universe: Let him endeavour to find out why it is put rather into this, than some other place of this infinite extent, wherein he is as it were lost and swallow'd up. It is impossible but that he should conclude, even the whole earth, by this survey to be a little dungeon wherein he finds himself confin'd: and if so, what must we say of the small room he fills on the earth? 'Tis true, he hath a power to change place; but he
never

Of the Weakness of Man. 13

never does this, but his loss is as great as what he acquires, and at all times he finds himself like an unperceptible atome swallow'd up in this immensity of the Universe.

XVII.

To this consideration let him add, that of all the great motions which toss up and down the matter of the world, and hurry about those vast bodies which rowle over our heads : let him add the consideration of whatsoever happens in this corporeal world, without dependance on him : let him put to this the contemplation of the Spiritual World, *viz.* that infinite number of Angels and Devils, that prodigious number of deceased ; which though dead in respect of us, are nevertheless more lively and active then before : farther, let him add the consideration of men now living, who think not on him, know him not, and over whom he hath no power. And whilst he is in this contemplation, let him ask of himself what he is in this double world, what is his rank, his force, his grandeur, his strength, in comparison of that of all other Creatures.

XVIII.

The principal end of this contemplation is, to humble man in the presence of
God

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God, and to teach him the knowledge of his own weakness, compar'd to the infinite power of his Maker. Nor is it a business of small consequence thus to humble ones self: for, then only we grow proud of what we are in our selves, when we forget what we are in respect of God Almighty. And for this reason the Apostle St. Peter recommends to us the humbling of our selves under the powerful hand of God. *Humiliamini sub potenti manu Dei.* It also aims at the rooting up of that vain complaisance man feels whilst he considers only the rank he holds in this little world, where he shuts himself up for enlarging the Scene to him, and obliging him to look on himself as one among so many other beings, he is brought to lose the Idea of that Phantastick greatness, which he onely ascribes to himself, as apart from the rest of the Creation. But we must drive this nail farther, and make it appear, that even all the strength he presumes to have in this his little world is naught but meer weakness, and that his vanity is ill grounded on all sides.

XIX.

The ground of all this force, of all this pretended greatness, is onely our life: for we regard our selves only as here, and
look

Of the Weakness of Man. 15

look on (in a manner) all those who are dead, as annihilated. But what is this life, whereon we build these pretensions, and what power have we to preserve it? It depends on the good disposition of a Machine so delicate, and made up of so many Springs; that, instead of wondring how it comes to be the cause of its own ruine, we have reason to admire, how it can subsist at all. The least Vessels which either break, or are stop'd, by interrupting the course of the Blood and Humours, spoils its Oeconomy. A little blood spilt in the Brain, is sufficient to stop those pores by which the spirits find passage to the Nerves, and so to still all its motions. We should be surpriz'd with wonder, did we but see how small that is which causes our death. Sometimes a drop of some forrain humour, a grain of matter wrong plac'd does the deed; and this drop, this grain suffices to overturn all the ambitious designs of our Conquerors and Lords of the world, and even to annihilate them in respect of men.

XX.

I remember there was once shown to a Person of great parts and quality, a piece of Ivory, most curiously wrought: it was a man mounted on a Pillar so small, that
the

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the least Wind was sufficient to shatter in pieces the whole work; nor could one enough admire the exquisite address of him that made it. Nevertheless, this Gentleman, instead of being surpriz'd as the rest were, did shew himself to be so struck with the frivolousness of the piece, and so concern'd for the loss of time employ'd in the making of it, that he could not mind that industry the others were taken with. I look'd on this sentiment as very just, but at the same time conceiv'd it might be rais'd to many things of greater consequence. All those vast fortunes by which as by different degrees, ambitious men ascend above the heads, not only of the commonalty, but also of the great ones, are sustain'd by props as small, as frail in their kind, as were those of this piece of wrought Ivory. A turn of imagination in the mind of a Prince, a malignant vapour in the head of those about him, are enough to bring to the ground this proud building, which after all, hath its foundation but on the life of our ambitious man. He once dead, on a sudden his fortunes are overthrown and brought to nothing. And what is there more brittle, more weak than the life of Man? With care we may preserve this little piece of Ivory, and
keep

Of the Weakness of Man. 17

keep it as long as we please ; but let what diligence soever be us'd to preserve life, there's no means left to hinder its coming to a period.

XXI.

If men did but reflect on this uncertainty of their lives, they would be infinitely more reserv'd, in engaging in so many designs, and so many enterprises, the compassing of which require men immortal, and bodies made otherwise than ours. Is it credible, that should one have punctually told all those, (who we have seen in our days, to have rais'd their fortunes high, which nevertheless have been dissipated after their death) what should happen to them and their Families ; and given them express notice, how that following the way they have taken, they should live in splendor a certain term of years, yet with a thousand cares, a thousand perplexities and crosses, that they should do their utmost to set up their Family, to leave it powerful in goods and offices ; that at a certain time they should dye ; and that afterwards all tongues and pens should be let loose against them, their families extinguish'd, their goods dissipated : is it credible, I say, that they would have undergone all those pains for
so

so small a matter? for my part, I believe it not. Though men do not positively promise to themselves Immortality and Eternity, for this would be too gross a folly; yet at least they never expressly fix their eyes on the narrow boundaries of their lives and riches: they are well pleas'd to forget, or not to reflect on c'm. And for this reason it is expedient to mind them thereof, by shewing, how all the fortunes, all the grandeurs they heap up, have for a *basis* but a life, that every thing is capable to destroy.

XXII.

Again, 'tis but the laying aside the memory of our life's frailty, and an ungrounded confidence to escape all dangers, which makes us undertake long Voyages to the end of the world, and hurry as far as *China* our bodies, that is, as we think, all our being, only to bring back some Spice and Varnish. Truly, if our thoughts were just, and if we equally balanc'd our hazards with what we aim to acquire, we should certainly conclude, that so small gains would not deserve to have so weak a Machine as ours, expos'd to so many dangers and inconveniences. But we voluntarily grow blind, even against our own interests. We onely love our life, and yet we hazard

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hazard it for every thing ; nay, we have establish'd as a maxime amongst us, that the fear of hazarding it is dishonourable.

XXIII.

If a man, no way by his duty obliged to take Arms, should, to excuse himself for not going to the Wars, alledge his not having a head Canon-proof, nor a body impenetrable by Swords and Pikes ; such an one methinks would speak very judiciously, and very agreably to the common disposition of men, who onely value the goods of this present life. For, seeing we cannot enjoy them without we live, a greater folly cannot be committed, then to hazard that life whereon that enjoyment is bottom'd. Nevertheless, 'tis agreed amongst men, contrary to their own principles, to look on this discourse as ridiculous : and why ? because they have their reasons yet weaker then their bodies, as shall shortly be made appear.

XXIV.

But, as it is onely by diverting his thoughts from considering the frailty of his life, that man runs into these extravagancies, and afterwards falls into this presumption of his own strength ; so it will be requisite continually to lay before his eyes, how all his greatness, whether of
body

body or mind which he assumes to himself, is entirely fix'd to this miserable life, which of it self is fasten'd to nothing, but expos'd to the assault of a thousand accidents. Nay, though no ill one befall us, yet the whole Machine of the world with an invincible force, labours incessantly to destroy our bodies: the motion of all nature daily carries away some part of us, our life is a building, whose foundation, nature, without intermission, undermines, and which will fall, when the props that sustain it, shall be ruin'd; nor doth any one precisely know how near, or how far he is off from this condition.

XXV.

'Tis strange men can trust to their life as to something firm and solid; men, who have so continual and so convincing arguments of its infallibility. I mean not the deaths of those like themselves, whom every moment they see disappear; and who are as so many Trumpets, proclaiming aloud, that they are mortals, and that it will shortly be their turn to disappear too, as well as they. Neither speak I of unusual diseases, which are as so many lashes to waken them out of their Lethargy, and warn them to think of dying. I speak only of the necessity they lye under
of

Of the Weakness of Man. 21

of repairing dayly the waste of their Bodies by eating and drinking. What is there of more force to make them feel their own weakness, then, by this continual need, to convince them of the continual decay of that body they endeavour to repair and make good against that impetuous torrent of nature, incessantly hurrying it to death? Hunger and Thirst, properly speaking, are mortal Diseases; they spring from causes incurable, and if for some time we give a stop to the effect, yet in the end they carry it against all remedies.

XXVI.

Let the greatest wit in the world be two days without eating, you shall presently see him languishing, without action, without thought almost, and solely taken up with the sentiment of his weakness and decay. There is a necessity of nourishment, to make those springs of his brain play, without which his Soul can do nothing. What deserves to humble us more than this necessity? yet is not this the most troublesome, since 'tis not the hardest to be cured; that of sleep is far more: that we may live, we must dye every day, ceasing to think and act like rational Creatures, and permitting our selves to fall into a condition wherein man is scarce distinct-

distinguish'd from Beasts; and this state wherein we live not, carries away a great part of our life.

XXVII.

We must undergo these necessities because God hath laid them on us. Nevertheless, it would be very reasonable, at least to look on them as marks of our weakness, since that partly to mind man of his abjection, it hath pleas'd God every day in this manner to reduce him to the state and condition of Brutes. In the meanwhile, such is the extravagancy of men, that they change into causes of vanity, that which ought most to humble them. There is nothing wherein they make appear, (if their abilities serve them) more pomp and magnificence, than in their Banquets; they pride themselves in this shameful necessity, and so far they are from taking thence an occasion of humility, that even it serves to distinguish them from others, when they are in a condition to do it with more state and ostentation.

XXVIII.

'Tis an easie matter speculatively to persuade men of the weakness of their bodies, and miseries of their nature; though it be a task of much difficulty to make them draw this so naturally flowing conclusion,
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to wit, that they ought to set no value on whatsoever leans on so tottering and so weak a foundation as their lives. But they are subject to other weaknesses, which they do not only neglect, but are not convinc'd they are lyable to them. They set an esteem on their knowledge, their quick sight, their virtue, the strength, and comprehensiveness of their understanding; they fancy themselves capable of great matters. The common discourses of men are full of the Elogies they bestow on one another for these endowments of mind: and the propensity they have to accept without farther examen for currant, whatsoever is said to their advantage, is the cause, that, if they have any good quality, they take not their measures to judge thereof, from what it is really, but from that common Idea they perceive of it in others.

XXIX.

But we ought to take for a very great weakness this propensity to judge of things, not according to truth, but the opinion of others. For, 'tis evident, that a false judgement cannot give a real being to what has none. If then we are not humble enough not to take a certain complaisance in what we really have, let us at least not be so foolishly vain, as, upon the testimony
of

of another, to attribute that to our selves, which we may know we have not. Wherefore let us examine what it is that puffs us up: let us see what there is of real and solid in humane sciences and virtues, and let us at least lopp off whatsoever we shall find to be vain and false.

XXX.

Knowledge is either of words, deeds, or things. I easily grant, that men are able to make a great progress in the science of words and signs, that is, in the knowledge of that arbitrary connexion they have made of certain sounds, with certain Idea's. I can well admire the capacity of their memory, which are able to contain, without confusion, so many different images of things: provided it be granted me, that this kind of knowledge is a great proof, not onely of our great ignorance, but also of our being almost incapable of knowing any thing; For, of it self it is of no price, or benefit. 'Tis onely to come to the knowledge of things that we learn the sense or words; 'tis but the way and means, not the end we seek after: yet this way is so long, these means so hard, that they cost us a great part of our life. Nay, many imploy it wholly on this study; and all the profit they thence reap, is to have learnt,

learnt, that certain signs are set apart by men, to signifie certain things; without being at all advanced thereby towards knowing their nature. Nevertheless, so vain is man, that he can boast of this kind of science, nay, on it doth he build most of his vanity; because he hath not power to withstand and slight the approbation of those *Ignoramus's* who are wont to admire such as are masters of it.

XXXI.

Nor is there much more solidity in the knowledge of Deeds or Historical passages: How few are there true, how small the number of those that are exactly related in Histories? We may judge by such as we have had peculiar knowledge of, that have been written by others. Now where's the means to distinguish the false from the true, the uncertain from the certain ones? We may in general know, that all Historians whatsoever, fall short of the truth; if sincere, with a good intention, if otherwise, with a bad one: but, as he doth not advertise us when it is he swerves from truth, we cannot but be sometimes deceiv'd.

Even then, when we cannot say that Hi-

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stories are false, how different are they from the things themselves? what Scheletons are Exploits there related, that is, separated from those secret motions which gave them life, and from those circumstances which contributed to give them success. They are therefore properly Scheletons, I mean, naked actions, or such as seem to depend on few springs, although indeed they were never produced, but with dependance on an infinite number of causes, to which they were fasten'd, and which prop'd them up, and gave them body. This kind of knowledge then is very inconsiderable, and instead of breeding in man a vain complaisance, ought rather to humble him with the sight of his weakness; since at the same time, that he finds his mind fill'd with such a number of Idea's, drawn out of Histories, he must also confess himself utterly unable to distinguish the true ones, from those that are not so.

XXXII.

We may place to the same account, the knowledge we have of mens Opinions on several points which they have made the subjects of their speculations; since these too make up a considerable part of what we call science. For, as if we had an
Eter-

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Eternity of time to lose, we are not satisfi'd with informing our selves what things in reality are, but we must keep an account too of all the Fancies and Whimsies of others concerning them: or rather not being able to succeed in finding truth, we content our selves to know their sentiments, who have gone in quest after it; and believe for example, we are great Philosophers, or great Physicians, because we know on each particular point the opinions of several that are so. But, as we become not richer for being acquainted with all the dreams of those who have hunted after the art of making Gold; neither shall we in like manner become wiser for having our memories burden'd with their imaginations, who have sought after, but never found out truth.

XXXIII.

Only therefore the knowledge of things, that is, that science which aims at satisfying our understandings with truth is, what can have any solidity in it. Yet should men, even in this, advance far, and make great progresses, they ought not nevertheless, therefore to set a value and esteem on their selves; since these barren knowledges are so little able to yield them any fruit or solid content, that one would

be full as happy in bidding them forthwith farewell, as in advancing them, by long toyle, to the highest pitch he can. Let a great Mathematician labour, and break his brain as much as he please, to find out some new stars in the Heavens, and trace the ways of Comets: We need onely reflect how easily we may dispence with this sort of knowledge, not to envy him, and be full as happy as he. And indeed, the content we take in them, rises not from the possession but acquisition of e'm. As soon as once we arrive there, they cease to be in our thoughts. 'Tis only the scrutiny and search which gives a diversion to our mind, because it is fed with the vain hope of an imaginary good which it promises it self in the discovery: but that once over, and it no more held up and animated by that hope, it must, to avoid tediousness, seek some other employment.

XXXIV.

But it is not sufficient that man draw motives of humility from the unprofitableness of these sciences; he ought moreover to acknowledge, that whatever can therein be attain'd by him, is almost nothing, and that the greatest part of humane Philosophy, is onely a heap of things obscure, uncertain, and even false. Nor need we
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any other proof than what hath happen'd in our days. During the space of three thousand years, Philosophers, on several principles, have discours'd of nature: when, behold, from a corner of the world comes a man, who hath changed the whole face of Philosophy, and who pretends to make it appear, that all those who went before him, knew nothing of the principles of nature. Nor are these onely vain promises; for it must be confes'd, that this new comer gives us more light towards the cognisance of Natural Beings, than all those together. Nevertheless, what good luck soever he hath had in laying open the little solidity there, is in the Principles of the Vulgar Philosophy; yet he hath left in his own many obscurities, impenetrable by humane wit. For Example, what he tells us of Space, and of the nature of Matter, is the subject of strange difficulties; and I fear much those who are not startled at them, are rather led by Passion than Evidence. What greater Example can we have of the weakness of Mans Wit, than to find that for three thousand years together, those amongst men who seem'd to be the sharpest sighted, have busied themselves in reasoning about Nature: and yet after so much

labour, and in spite of the infinite number of Books they have writ on this subject, we are to begin again; and the greatest profit we can draw from their works, is to learn, that Philosophy is a vain employment, and that in it we know almost nothing.

XXXV.

When ignorant people cast their eyes on those great Libraries, which one may, in a manner, call the Magazines and Store-houses of the thoughts of men; they fancy that man would be very happy, or at least very learned, who knew whatever is contained in those great heaps of Volumes, which they look on as Treasures of Light and Truth. But here they judge amiss: When all this should be got united into one head; yet would not this head be either better order'd, or wiser, or happier: It would but increase its confusion, and obscure and darken its light; and when all's done, this head would not differ much from a material Library. For as one cannot read but in one Book at once, and in that but one Page; so he that should have in his head all these Books, could not be able to apply himself at once but to one Book, and to one certain part of that Book. All the rest would in some sort be as much
out

out of his thoughts, as if he knew it not at all; and all the advantage he could draw thence, would be, that he could sometimes supply the want of Books, by searching with trouble in his memory for what he keeps there; and yet shall he not be so assured thereof, as if he at the same time, took the pains to consult his Books thereupon.

XXXVI.

To comprehend therefore how small the science of men is, we must descend as it were by degrees to the low point whereunto it is reduced. Small would our knowledge be, were our Soul capable all at once to apply it self, to whatsoever is stor'd up in our memory; for even then we should know but few Truths. But we, as I just now said, are only capable of knowing one Object, and one Truth at a time: All other things are buryed in our memory, as if they were not there. Behold now our Science reduced to the knowledge of one only Object: But in what manner too do we know that? If it contains divers qualities, we reflect on but one at a time. We divide the most simple Beings into divers Idea's, because our Soul is too narrow to comprehend them all. All is too much for it: We must contract and lessen

whatever we consider, or at least lopp off the greatest part, to proportion it to our littleness.

XXXVII.

The seeing, with our understanding, hath something like to that with our Eyes; I mean the one is as short and superficial as other. Our Eyes peirce not into the depth of Bodies, the surface terminates their sight; the farther they extend it, the more confused it grows, and to view any thing exactly, we must lose the sight of all others. Objects, if remov'd far from us, are, by the weakness of the Organe wherein their Image is received, reduced to the smallness of the least Bodies here about us. Those prodigious bulks we call Stars, to our Eyes are but Points, and appear to us almost but as Sparks. Behold the portraiture of the sight of our mind! 'tis but the bark and superficies that we know of most things. We, as it were, loosen from them a thin skin or film, to make thereof the Object of our thoughts, If the Objects be of any extent, we are confounded; we must of necessity consider them by piece-meal, and it often happens, that the multiplicity of parts we subdivide them into, brings us into that confusion we desired to shun. *Confusum est quic-*

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quicquid pulverem sectum est. If Objects be not near and present to our Senses, 'tis but a point thereof we often reach to; and we frame Idea's so weak, so small of the greatest and most dreadful things, that they make a less impression on our Understandings, than even the least of those which move and work upon our Senses.

XXXVIII.

But here's not all yet; though what our Understanding can comprehend of truth be considerable; yet hath it not even of this a firm and assured possession: This often comes to be troubled by diffidence, incertainties. Falsity appears to us clad in Colours so like those of Truth, that we lose our selves, and know not where we are. Hence it is, that we lay hold on, and embrace Truth but weakly, and tremblingly as it were; nor do we arm and defend our selves against this incertainty, but by a certain instinct, and a certain sentiment, which makes us adhere to the Truths we know, in spite of the reasons which seem contrary thereunto.

XXXIX.

Behold then to what a low ebb the knowledge men so much boast of, is reduced, *to wit*, to the knowing a small number of Truths one by one, and that in a

weak and diffident manner. But even of these Truths how many are almost useless; and of those that are useful in themselves, how few are so to us, and which may not prove Principles of Error? For it is another effect of the Weakness of Man, that even light blinds him sometimes as well as darkness, and that Truth as well as Falsity deceives him. And the reason is, that, conclusions depending ordinarily on the connection of several Truths, not on the knowledge of one only; it often comes to pass that one sole Truth imperfectly known, being by mistake look'd on as a sufficient guide, misleads us into Errors. For Example, how many are there who run headlong into indiscretions, led by the knowledge of this particular Truth, that we owe correction to our Neighbour? How many are there who authorize their debauches, by Maxims most true, touching Christian condescension and compliance.

XL.

If no track appear, we go astray, if many, we are confounded; and the quick sight of our mind, which discovers many reasons, and lays open to us large Prospects, is as capable of deceiving us, as a doltish stupidity that sees nothing. Often
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we are deceived by the impression others give us whilst they communicate to us their Errors; and sometimes we deceive our selves, whilst we discover them in others; for we are inclined to believe, that they are wrong in all, whereas they are mistaken often but in part.

XLII.

The discovering of Truth in most things, depends on the Comparison made betwixt Likelyhoods: But, what more deceitful than this Comparison? Or, what of it self carries less of likelyhood, being placed more in view by the manner of expression, and considered with more earnestness and passion, is capable of making a deeper impression in our minds, than many other things; which, though grounded on reasons far more solid, are proposed obscurely, and harkned to negligently, and without concern or passion. Hence the inequality of clearness, the inequality of application, and the inequality of passion, often counterpoise, or entirely overcome the advantage one reason hath over another, either in solidity or likelyhood.

XLII.

But what adonishes most of all is, that the mind of Man being so weak, so narrow, so limited, so prone to go astray, is

at the same time, nevertheless so full of presumption, that there's nothing it cannot believe it self capable of, provided there be any who in this particular do cajolle and flatter it. What is there more apparently above the understanding and reach of the most part of Mankind, particularly of the simple and ignorant sort, than to discern amongst the various Points disputed and contested among Christians, which are to be rejected, which to be followed? to decide rationally only one of these Questions, there's required a very great, and seldom found extent and comprehension of mind: What then shall we say when our concern is to decide them all, and, by comparing the Reasons and Motives of each Christian Society, to make choice of a Religion. In the mean time the Authors of new Heresies have perswaded a hundred millions of Men, that nothing herein surpass'd the strength of their own wit. Nay, even this has been the way, by which they have brought them over to themselves: Their followers have thought it a fine thing to be themselves Judges of Religion by a peculiar discussion of contested Points; and they have look'd on this right of judging thus put into their hands, as a considerable advantage the *Roman Church* had unjustly

justly taken from them. Nevertheless, we ought not elsewhere to seek for the cause of this presumption, then in the Weakness of Man. It solely proceeds from this, that Man is so far from knowing Truth, that he is ignorant of its Marks and Characters. Often he has but confused Idea's and Notions of the very terms of evidence, and certitude: and hence it is he applies them by hazard to all the idle glimpses that strike his sight. Whatever pleases him, strait becomes evident. Thus when an Heretick hath made his own fancies sacred, by the titles he gives them of undoubted Truths clearly contained in Scripture; presently he smothers all doubts which can be rais'd against them; nor does he give himself leave to consider them; or if he do, he only looks on them as objections and difficulties; and so takes from them all the force they had to make any impression on his mind.

XLIII.

If therefore humane wit be so inconsiderable even then when it bestirs it self, and is in search of Truth, what shall we say of it, when abandon'd to the weight of its own body, when it acts but by the Senses, as it happens in most part of Men,

XLIV.

This is what the Scripture teaches us, when it says, That *the Earthly dwelling presses down the mind, thinking on many things*. For, discovering to us in these words the natural activeness of the mind, which makes it able of it self to frame great variety of thoughts, and to comprehend an infinite number of Objects; at the same time it sets before our Eyes the condition whereto the mind is reduced by its union with a corrupt Body, and by the necessities of this present life; which so clog and weigh down the mind, though of it self never so active, penetrating, and comprehensive, that they confine it to a very small circle of gross and material Objects, amongst which it rolls continually, but with a motion slow and feeble, and which shews nothing of the excellence and greatness of its nature. In fine, if we look about, and consider all the Men in the world, we shall find almost all so sottish and stupid, that if Reason be not intirely extinct in them, at least it is of so little use, that it amazes one to think how a Soul can be reduced to such a Brutality. A *Canibal*, a *Brasilian*, a *Negro*, a *Greenlander*, or *Laplander*; about what busies their thoughts? to hunt, to fish, to dance,
to

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to revenge themselves of their Enemies; and that's all.

XLV.

But, without travelling so far for Examples of Mans stupidity, what takes up the thoughts of our Labouring Men? They think on their work, of eating, drinking, sleeping, calling in their debts, paying custom, and a small number of such things. As for other matters, they are, as it were, unsensible; and they are so accustomed to run this round in the little circle, that they become incapable of conceiving any thing beyond it. If one tell them of God, Hell, Heaven, of Religion, and the Precepts and Rules of Morality, they either understand not, or in a trice forget what is said, and their minds presently return again to this little circle of gross Objects, whereunto they are accustomed. If they are infinitely removed by their nature from that of Brutes, such as it in reality is; yet are they little different from the conceit we have of them; for we fancy a Brute to be a certain Animal, that thinks, yet thinks but little and seldom, whose Ideas and thoughts are confused and gross, and which is able to comprehend but a very small number of Objects. Thus we conceive a Horse to be an Animal, which thinks
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of eating, sleeping, and running. For all that, this is not the Idea of a Horse; for a Machine thinks not at all: But it is the proper Idea or Notion of a stupid doltish Man; and to say the truth, few other thoughts need be super-added to these, to frame the notion of a wild *Tartar*.

XLVI.

Nevertheless, the number of those who scarce think at all, and who are wholly employed about the necessities of this present life, is so great of those others, whose minds are in some motion and agitation, is nothing compar'd to it. For, even amongst Christians, the number of stupid ones comprehends almost all our Labouring Men, all our Poor, the greatest part of Women of low degree, and all Children, without exception. All these spend their whole life almost on nothing but the thoughts of satisfying the necessities of their Bodies, of finding out a means how to live, of buying and selling; and even of these things they frame thoughts confused enough. But of other Nations, particularly those who are the most Barbarous, it comprehends the whole mass of people, without any reserve at all.

XLVII.

It is certain, that those who live by bodily

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dily labour, as all the poor in the world do, think less than others; and that this labour and work makes even their Soul more heavy. On the contrary, Riches which allow more liberty and leasure to entertain one another, as also those employments of mind which oblige them to discourse together, hinder their Souls from falling into so great a stupidity. The mind of a Lady at Court is more shining, active, than that of a Country Woman; and the mind of a Magistrate, than that of a Tradesman. But as there is more of motion, and more action, so there is for the most part more of malice and vanity; so much, that there is more of real good in an honest simple stupidity, than in this activity full of artifice and deceit.

XLVIII.

In fine, to finish the Picture of the Weakness of Mans mind, we must moreover consider, that let his thoughts be never so exact and true, yet he is often hurried with violence from them by a natural disorder of his imagination. A small fly passing before his Eyes, is able to distract him, when in the most serious contemplation. A thousand Idle Idea's and Whimsies disturb and confound him, in spite of his teeth; and so little is he master of himself,
that

that he cannot but cast a look at least on these idle vain fancies, taking off his thoughts from considering the most important matters. May we not with reason call this condition of Man a beginning of folly? for, as absolute folly consists in an intire disorder of the imagination; proceeding from hence, that the Images it represents are so lively, that the mind no more distinguishes the false from the true ones; so the power that the imagination has to set before the mind these Images, without the leave or consent of the Will, is a certain commencement of folly, and to render it compleat, there needs only an encrease of some degrees of heat in the brain, and make these Images more lively. So that betwixt the condition of the wisest man in the world, and that of the most absolute fools, the only difference is some degrees of heat and agitation in the Animal Spirits. And we are not only forc'd to own our selves capable of folly, but moreover we must acknowledge that we feel and see it perfectly form'd in us; whilst we know not where it sticks, that it becomes not absolute by an intire eversion of our mind.

XLIX.

Though our reason be weak even to the
degree

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degree we have shewn ; yet is this nothing in respect of the Weakness of the other part of Man, *to wit*, his Will. And it may be said, comparing them together, that his strength consists in his Reason, and that his weakness springs from the impotency of his Will, to conduct himself by reason.

'Tis agreed on all hands, that reason is given to serve us for a guide during this life ; that by it we may distinguish betwixt Good and Evil, and know how to regulate our desires and actions. But how few are they, who make use of it to this purpose ; and who live, I say not according to Truth and Justice, but even according to their own reason, all blind and all disordered as it is? We are tost on the Sea of this world at the pleasure of our Passions, hurrying us sometimes this, sometimes that way, like a Ship without Sail, without Pilot : And it is not Reason which makes use of Passions, but Passions which make use of Reason to compass their ends ; and this is all the stead Reason stands us in for the most part.

L.

Often also Reason it self is brib'd and corrupted. It sees what ought to be done, is convinc'd of the frivolousness of the things

things we are carried away with: Yet can it not ward off the violent impressions they give us. How many have engaged themselves in Duells, at the same time deploring and condemning both this wretched Custom, and themselves for following it? Yet they had not the power to slight the judgment of those fools, who would have esteemed them cowards, should they have obeyed and yielded to reason: How many ruine their Estates in foolish expences, and reduce themselves to extrem miseries, because they cannot overcome the false shame they feel, not to do as others do?

What easier task is there than to convince the world of the little worth and solidity of whatsoever draws man after it? In the mean time, in spite of all these Arguments, this Bugbear of Reputation, of Honour, of Place, and a thousand of other things as vain and idle, lead and overturn men at pleasure; because their Souls have neither force, solidity, nor weight to fix them.

LI.

What would one say of a Souldier, who, being advertised in that, in a Show representing a Skirmish, the Musquets and Cannons only charged with Powder, should never

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nevertheless dop his head, and at the first discharge run away? should not one say, that his cowardice approached near to folly? And yet this is what we our selves do every day. We are warned, that the words and judgments of Men are as incapable of hurting, as they are of being any way serviceable to us, they can neither take from us our Goods, nor relieve or comfort us in our Evils. And nevertheless these words, these judgments are sufficient to trouble us, and discompose the quiet temper of our Souls. A wry look, an ill word makes us cholerick, and we prepare to return it back, as if it were something very formidable. We must be flattered and carested like Children to be kept in a good humour; else in our fashion we fall a crying, as Children do in theirs.

LII.

It is a thing most certain, that the impatience Men shew on all occasions, hath its rise from some passion. But the passions themselves spring from weakness, and the slender tye their Soul has to true and solid Goods. And, to understand this, we may consider that, as it is not weakness in our Body to have need of the Earth to sustain it, this being the natural condition of all Bodies; but we only then term it weak, when

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when it hath need to be underprop'd by some thing that belongs not to it, when it must be carried, or make use of a staff, and is in danger of being overturn'd by every little blast: So the weakness of the Soul consists not in that it needs something of true and solid to sustain it, and that it cannot subsist as hanging in the Air, without being fastned to some Object: Or, if this be a weakness, 'tis an essential one to whatsoever is created, which not being self-sufficient, is forc'd to seek elsewhere something for its support.

But the true weakness of the Soul consists, in that it rests and leans upon nothing, as the Scripture says, and not upon things real and solid: Or, if it rely on some Truth, this Truth suffices it not, nor it hinders its need of a thousand other props, the want of which throws it immediately down into despair. This weakness of the Soul consists in that the least blast is able to bereave it of its repose; that the least trifle, shakes, torments, and troubles it; and in that it cannot make head against the impression of a thousand things, whereof it self knows the fallity, and the nothingness.

LIII.

This is in little the Image of Mans Weak-

Of the Weakness of Man. 47

Weakness: And it is worth the while to take a particular view thereof, that one may observe its different strokes.

Although a Man cannot in this life have true repose, yet 'tis certain he is not always melancholly, or in despair. There is a necessity his Soul should sometime be hxt, because it is weak and unconstant, that it cannot even be in a continual agitation. The greatest misfortunes become toleable in time, the sentiment we have of them is lost and vanishes away. Poverty, shame, diseases, the loss of our being abandoned by Friends, Parents, Children, gives us blows whose smart lasts not long; the agitation they give us by degrees grows less, till it quite ceases.

The Soul then at last finds some kind of repose, and it is common to all Men, to have sometime or other during their life a calm and untroubled disposition of mind; but that so fickle and unsteady, that almost any thing is enough to discompose it,

The reason is, because Man doth not maintain himself in it, by adhering to any solid Truth he knows clearly; but by leaning to a number of petty supports, and is as it were fastned by a world of weak and small threads, to a no less number of vain things, and which depend not on him. So
that

that, as it always happens, that some of these threads break, he in part falls, and thereby receives a shake, which discomposes him. We are cajoled and carried away with the little circle of friends and approvers which environ us: For every one endeavours to procure himself such a circle, and usually composes it. We are carried away with the obedience and affection of our Servants, the protection of great ones, with our little successes, with praises, divertisements, and pleasures. We are amused with employments, with the hopes we nourish, with the designs we form, with the works we undertake. We are taken with the curiosity of a Cabinet, a Garden, a Country House. In fine, it is wonderful to think to what a number of things the Soul adheres, and how many little props and helps are necessary to keep it in repose:

LIV.

While we are masters of these things, we know not how great our dependance on them is. But when they fail, as they often do, by our resentment for their loss, we learn, that we had a reality and affection to them. A broken Glass puts us out of patience; our repose therefore depended thereon. A false and ridiculous

culous censure which an impertinent fellow shall make of us, touches us to the quick: The esteem therefore this impertinent fellow had, or at least, our not knowing the false judgment he made of us, contributed to our repose, and without our being aware of it, we rested and leaned thereon.

LV.

We have not only a continual need of these vain helps, but so great is our weakness, that they are not able to sustain us long. We must change; else by our weight we should break them. Whilst Birds are in the Air, they cannot stay there without motion; nor easily in the same place, both because what sustains them is not solid; and on the other side, they have not force and vigour enough of themselves to bear up against what drives them downwards. They must be in a continual agitation, and by new impulses given the Air, they must without intermission make it apt to support them. But as soon as they cease to make use of this Art, Nature hath taught them, like other heavy Bodies they fall to the ground. Our Spiritual weakness suffers effects like to these. We rest and trust to the Judgments of Men, to the Pleasures of Sense, to Humane Comforts, as to an

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Air

Air that keeps us up for a time: But, because things of this nature have no solidity, if we cease to stir, if we change not the Objects of our thoughts, we strait fall into melancholly and sadness, each Object in particular is not able to keep our Hearts up. It is by continual changes the Soul maintains it self in a condition it can away with, and that it hinders it self from being overwhelmed with grief and melancholly. Thus the Soul subsists only by Art. It tends by its own weight to discouragement and despair. Madness and Hell are the center of corrupted Nature. These in some sort we carry about us, even during this life, and it is only to prevent its feeling them, that the Soul bestirs it self so much, and searches employment out of it self, in so many interiour Objects. To enslave the Soul perfectly to this Madness, one need but separate it from all these Objects, and constrain it to think only on it self. And, as this is the proper effect of Death, that would precipitate all Mankind into this center of misery, had not God, by his Omnipotent Power, given to some other *Byasses*, which draw them up to Heaven.

LVI.

It is not less true of the Will of Man
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considered in it self, and without the assurance of God, than of his knowledge and understanding, that whatever appears great in it, is naught but weakness; and that the names of force and courage, by which we heighten and raise certain actions and dispositions of the Soul, hides under them what is most cowardly and base. That which we take for running, is a flight; for rising, a fall; for constancy, lightness. That immovable and inflexible stiffness which appears in some actions, is naught but a hardness produced by the wind of Passions, swelling and puffing up like Balloons those they are Masters of. Sometimes this wind raises them high, sometimes throws them headlong down: but they are equally light and weak, whether high or low.

LVII.

What is it makes so many betake themselves to be Souldiers, a profession wherein they must of necessity expose themselves to so many dangers, and undergo so much toil? Is it a desire to serve their Prince and Country? For the most part 'tis the least in their thoughts. 'Tis therefore because they cannot lead an orderly and regular life; 'tis because they would shun that labour their condition engages them to; 'tis because they love what they see

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of licentious in the life of Souldiers; 'tis a weakness of their mind, an illusion of their imagination, flattering them by false hopes; and which, shewing them in a full light the evils they would shun, hides and conceals from them those to which they expose themselves.

LVIII.

Do not think that gallant Man, who with so much courage and fierceness marches to the assault, does seriously contemn Death, or reflect much on the Justice of the cause he fights for: No, he's totally possess'd with the fear of the ill opinion the World would have of him, should he give back; and this opinion, like an Enemy, presses upon him, and permits him not to think on any thing else: And hence springs this his undaunted courage.

LIX.

It is not unpleasant to cast ones Eye, on those, whom the World would have to pass for great Examples of humane force and generosity, in those passages of their lives, where they wanted that wind which drives them forward in their splendid and pompous actions: For there we shall see those pretended Hero's, who seem'd to out-brave Death, and laugh at what is most terrible, brought down by the least cross

Of the Weakness of Man. 53

cross accident, and forc'd to own with shame their weakness. Look on *Alexander*, who had caused the whole Earth to tremble, and who in the field had so often affronted Death, seized on by a mortal sickness in *Babylon*. Scarce had Death appear'd to him open fac'd, but presently his Palace is filled with Sorcerers of both Sexes, with Priests and Sacrifices. There is no kind of superstition he had not recourse to, to shelter himself from that Death which threatned him, and which carried him out of the World at last, having first kill'd him with its only look, and reduc'd him to what was most base and despicable. Could he give us a greater evidence, that when he seem'd to contemn Death, he thought it far off, and that the passions he was transported with, cast as it were a Veil before his Eyes, which hindred him from seeing it?

LX.

Neither let any imagine, there was more of true courage amongst those Heathens, who seem'd not thus to have given themselves the lye, and who to the sight of the World dyed with as much courage, as they had lived. Let the Elogies and Praises, wherewith Philosophers, even to envy, heighten and raise the Death of *Cato*,

be as great and pompous as they will, 'twas but a real effective weakness that carried him to that Brutality, which they look on as the height of humane generosity. This is apparent enough in *Cicero*, when he says, *That Cato ought to dye, rather than see the face of a Tyrant.* 'Twas therefore the fear of seeing the face of *Cæsar*, that inspired him with this desperate resolution. He could not endure to see himself under him whom he had endeavoured to ruine; nor to see him triumph over his vain resistance. 'Twas only to find in death a Sanctuary against this *Spectrum* of a *Cæsar* victorious, that carried him to violate all the Laws of Nature. *Seneca*, whose Idol *Cato* was, allows him no other reason, when he makes him say, *Since the affairs of Mankind are in a desperate condition; let us place Cato in one of safety.* 'Twas his safety then alone *Cato* thought on, he only thought to remove from before his Eyes an Object his weakness could not endure the sight of. So that, instead of saying as *Seneca* does, *That with violence be set at liberty that Generous Soul, and contemner of all Humane Power: Generosum illum contemptoremq; omnis potentia Spiritum eiecit:* We ought to say, that out of pittiful weakness he could not stand an Object which all the Women and Children

Of the Weakness of Man. 55

dren of *Rome* could gaze at without trouble; and that his dread thereof was so violent, that it forced him to leave this life by the greatest of all crimes.

LXI.

Those calm Deaths, without the appearance of passion or fury, such as *Socrates's* was, might be look'd on as more generous. Nevertheless all this tranquility, all this calmness, was but a small matter, since it only sprung from ignorance and blindness. *Socrates* believed he ought not to be afraid of Death, because, he said, he knew not whether it were Good or Evil. But thus he made it appear, he had but a slender notion or Idea of the condition Death reduces us to. For is it not a great and terrible misfortune not to know whether we shall be happy or miserable, when we are about to enter into a state of Being, which will continue for Eternity? Must not one be prodigiously insensible, not to be touched with that dreadful uncertainty, and to be in an humour, when just on the point of making this tryal, to be pleased yet with the discourse of ones friends, and take pleasure in that vain satisfaction, which one receives from the sentiments of love and esteem they then shew us? Yet this is what fill'd the Soul of *Socrates* that day,

which, according to the opinion of Philosophers, was the happiest of his Life, viz. that of his Death.

LXII.

If Vertues purely humane be meer Weaknesses, what shall we say of Mens Vices? What greater weakness than that of an ambitious person? He flights all the real and solid Goods of this life: He undergoes a thousand dangers, exposes himself to a thousand crosses; because he cannot suffer that another should have some vain pre-eminence over him. What greater weakness than to esteem and take pleasure as we do in a thousand ridiculous trifles, even then when we are perswaded they are such? Where is the Man that is not convinced 'tis a meanness to think himself worthy of esteem, because he is well clad, becomes a Horse well, is dexterous in striking a Ball, or walks gracefully? In the mean time, how few are those who are above these trifles, and who are not pleased when they are praised for them.

LXIII.

What a weakness is it to find any gust in the divertisements of the World? Can a Soul be reduced to a meaner condition, and more unworthy of it self, than chacing
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away all other thoughts, to employ it self only about the care of carrying and moving the Body it animates, according to the cadence of some Musical Instruments; and in following certain brute Beasts which run after one another? Yet is this almost all that makes up the divertisements of Princes and great ones. This privation of rational thoughts, this total application of the Soul, to some Objects gross, vain, and useless, creates what is pleasant in all Games. The less Man acts, as Man, the more content he is. Those Actions where Reason hath the greatest share, become troublesome, and quite tire him: The bent of his Nature, is to reduce him as much as can be to the condition of Brutes.

LXIV.

Let Man dissemble as much as possible he can his own weakness, he is nevertheless sensible thereof: He endeavours what he can to redress it; but so void of Light and Reason is his carriage in the search of remedies, that instead of diminishing, he augments it. The true end and aim of the ambitious and voluptuous Man, is but to underprop and hold up his weakness by some externe support. The ambitious strives to do it by Lustre and Authority,

the voluptuous by Pleasures. Both the one and the other seeks to satisfy their indigency; but both are equally unsuccessful, because they do but increase their necessities and want, and by consequence * Chrys. hom. their weakness also. *What, 79. in Joan. says * St. Chrysostome, doth distinguish Angels from Men, but that they are not needy as we are?* Thus those who need the least, come nearest to them, and those are the farthest off, who need the most. *He who needs, (says this Father in another place) many things, is a slave to many things, is himself the Servant of his Servants, and depends more on them than they on him.* So that the increase of Worldly Goods and Honours, being but the increase of our slavery and dependance, reduces us to a more real and effective misery.

LXV.

Let us not therefore seek for strength in the Nature of Man. On which side soever we look on it, we shall find naught but weakness and impotency. In God only, and his Grace we ought to seek for it. 'Tis he alone can enlighten our darkness, fix and settle our Wits, sustain our Temporal Life as long as he pleases, and at last change the weakness and infirmities of
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of our Souls and Bodies into an everlasting state of strength and glory. Whatsoever hath been said of the Weakness of Man, serves only to exalt and heighten the power of that Grace which supports him. For what force must not it have to make a Nature so corrupted, so weak, so miserable, victorious over it self and Hell, to raise it above all things, and make it overcome the World, with whatever it hath of deceitful, pleasing or terrible. *Magna gloria opus est, ut cum omnibus amoribus et erroribus erroribus vincatur hic mundus.*

LXVI.

But if it be true, that nothing doth more manifest the power of Grace, than the Weakness of Man; one may say so, that nothing doth so much lay open and discover his weakness, as the Grace and Lights God Almighty gives him; and that in some sort the infirmities of Nature are more conspicuous in those whom God hath the most favoured with his Grace. It deserves not so much our wonder, that Men surrounded with darkness, neither knowing what they are, nor what they do, following only the impressions of their Senses, and the capricious humour of their imagination, should appear light, inconsistent and weak, in all their actions. But
who

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who would not believe that those whom God hath enlightned with such pure knowledge, to whom he hath made known their double End, two Eternities, one of Beatitude, the other of Misery, attending them, who have their Souls brim-full of those great and dreadful Objects of a Hell, of Devils, of Angels, of Saints, of a God, that dy'd for those who shall prefer him before all things else: Who would not have thought, I say, that they would have been out of the reach of, and incapable to be moved by the trifles of this world? And yet it is not so: Even their Hearts are often sensible of the least things. They are mov'd at a cold entertainment; an uncivil word shakes them. Sometimes they sink under the slightest temptations, even then when God gives them the Grace to overcome the greatest. Moreover they experience themselves subject to a thousand passions, a thousand idle thoughts, a thousand irrational motions. The fopperies of the world disturb their most serious meditations: And if they do not fall downright into the precipice of sin, yet they feel a certain weight and bent which drives them that way, and at the same time perceive they have no power to hinder their falling thither; and that if God should
abandon

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abandon them to themselves; they should in a moment be absorp'd.

LXVII.

Thus it is, that they are the Men, who to speak properly, are aware of their poverty, and can say with the Prophet, *Ego vir videns paupertatem meam*. Worldly Men are poor and weak without knowing it. 'Tis when he would make use of his strength, that a sick man knows the want thereof. 'Tis but when we endeavour to resist and make against the torrent, which drives us down, that we know its rapid violence. Pious Men therefore are only they who know their weakness, because they alone endeavour to overcome it; and though indeed they are victorious in things of most importance, yet it is with so many imperfections, and so many faults, and at the same time they perceive so many other things, wherein they overcome not; that they have but so much more reason to be convince'd of their own misery.

LXVIII.

Not only then the most imperfect, the least illuminated, and those to whom we give the name of weak, ought to say to God, *Have mercy on me O Lord for I am weak*. But the most perfect, the most strong, and those who received the most light, and greatest favours from Almighty God. For the proper effect.

effect of this light is to make them see further into, and have a deeper sentiment of their own meanness and misery, and to make them acknowledge before Almighty God, that they are nothing but darkness in their Understanding, nothing but weakness and unconstancy in their Will; that their life is only an Image which passes away, a Vapour that of it self is dispers'd. 'Tis this Light that makes them cry to God with the Prophet; *My Being is but a nothing before thee, Et substantia mea tanquam nihilum ante te.* And that, taking thus from them all confidence in their own strength, vilifies and annihilates them in their own sight, fills them at the same time with admiration of the Infinite Power of God, and of the incomprehensible Abyss of his Wisdom; and so makes them throw themselves into his Arms by an humble confidence, acknowledging that he alone is able to support them amongst so many diseases and weaknesses, who is able to free them from so many evils, to make them victorious over so many enemies; finally, that it is only in him they can find that Strength, that Health, that Light which they cannot find in themselves, nor in all the other Creatures besides.

The End of the first Treatise.

Second



Second Treatise.

Of Submission to the Will of God.

First P A R T.

*Doce me facere voluntatem tuam, quia
Deus meus es tu.*

I.

THE most general difference the Holy Scripture puts betwixt Just Men and Sinners, is, that the first walk in the ways of God, the second in ways of their own. So that he hath summ'd up the disorders to which Gods Justice abandon'd the Heathens into this one saying, comprehending them all : *Dimisit omnes Gentis ingredi vias tuas :*

tuas : He left all Nations to walk in their own ways. On the contrary the Prophet concludes all the instructions JESUS CHRIST was to give the world in this other : *He shall teach us his ways, Docebit nos vias eas.*

II.

Now to know what it is to walk in ones own ways, we need but consider what St. Paul says in another place, of the condition of Men before Faith. He says, then, that they walk'd in the vanity of their own sentiments, and follow'd the will of the flesh, and their own thoughts. *Ambulantis in vanitatis sensus sui, facientes voluntatem carnis & cogitationem.* On the other side, to know what it is to walk in the ways of God, we need but take notice of this passage of St. Peter, where, speaking of what the Faithful newly converted should propose to themselves to do, he says, That they ought to resolve to lead the rest of their life in following the Will of God, and not the desires of Men, *Ut jam non desiderijs hominum sed Voluntate Dei quod reliquum est in carne vivat temporis.* So that, to follow ones own will, is to walk in ones own way, and to live like a Heathen : And to follow the Will of God, is to walk in the way of God, and to live like a Christian.

III.

III.

Hence the first Motion Grace inspired into St. Paul, when perfectly converted, was to make him say to JESUS CHRIST. *Lord what is thy Pleasure that I should do?* *Domine, quid vis me facere?* And this Motion of Grace carried with it a renouncing of all his life past, in which he had only follow'd his own inclinations; a firm resolution to follow the Will of God during the remainder of his life; and an hearty desire of coming to the knowledge of it. So that in some sort it comprehended all the Vertues St. Paul practic'd afterwards; as the Tree and Root contains the Fruit which the Tree is to produce in its proper season.

IV.

There is no Christian who ought not to say to God by the Example of St. Paul, *Lord, what is it thy Pleasure that I should do?* Nor is it enough to say it at the beginning of ones conversion; 'tis a protestation to be renewed without intermission all ones life; because our own Will, which never dies in us, is alway endeavouring to repossess it self of its Empire, and to abolish the Reign of the Will of God.

We ought always to desire to know the Will of God, because our ignorance every
moment

moment hides it from us. We ought always to have a desire of following it, because our concupiscence never ceases to draw us from it, that it may carry us to what it loves. But to the end this desire, this protestation of obeying God prove not unfruitful, and remain a meer notion without effect, it will be profitable seriously to meditate what it is to follow the Will of God, and in what manner we ought to practice this essential duty of Christian Life, in all the particular Rencontres of ours. And to do this, we must first know what is the Will of God we intend to follow.

V.

The Holy Scripture, and the Doctrine of the Church, obliges us to look on the Will of God in two manners. First, as the Rule of our Duties, prescribing us what we ought to do, shewing us the dispositions we ought to aim at, discovering to us what we ought to desire, what to shun, whither to tend; condemning all Evil, and commanding all Good. Secondly, as the cause of whatever happens in the World, except sin; efficaciously producing whatever is good, and only permitting evil, to draw good out of it.

VI.

VI.

According to the first conception, the Holy Scripture gives the Will of God divers names, all denoting the same thing. 'Tis that *Law Eternal*, whereof St. *Austin* speaks so often, forbidding us to disturb, and commanding us to preserve the order of Nature; and which, placing Man betwixt God, and Creatures corporeal and inanimate, forbids him to settle his love on any thing but the Sovereign Being; since he cannot do that but by leaving the rank and place he has in the order of things, and putting himself under what is either his inferior or equal. 'Tis that *Divine Justice* which sparkles in our Souls, as the same St. *Austin* says; rendring whatsoever is conformable, if amiable to us, though otherwise we should find nothing therein which would draw our love. It is but in loving and following this Justice, that Men are Just; and it is by receding from it that they become unjust and sinners.

These are those *Judgments*, those *Justifications*, *David* speaks of so often, that is to say, those Just and Holy Rules and Ordinances instructing Man what he ought to do; and which are written in God himself, because they are nothing but his all Just, and all Equitable Will. It is that *Wisdom*
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the Wise Man speaks of in all his Books, which one ought to thirst after without intermission, that one ought to search for, like Silver, that serves us for a guide in our way, and that dwells in God, and with God. *Omnis sapientia a Domino Deo est, & cum illo fuit semper, & est ante eum.*

These are those *Commandments* and *Precepts* the Scripture calls *Eternal*, and which it enjoys us to have always before our Eyes, and keep close in our Hearts; which ought to walk with us; which ought not to leave us in our sleep, and which ought to be the first Object of our thoughts when we awake. *Liga ea in corde tuo jugiter, cum ambulaveris gradiantur tecum, cum dormieris custodiant te, & evigilanti loquere cum eis.*

It is that *Light*, which makes us be the *Children of Light*; which is the cause that some walk in *Darkness*, others in *Light*, according as they either leave or follow it. *Quia mandatum lucerna est, & lex lux.*

It is that *Truth* according to which it is said of the Just, that they *walk in Truth*, that they *are in Truth*, and that they *do the Truth*. Lastly, it is God himself; for all these names signifie but the Will of God, and the Will of God is God himself.

VII.

This Justice, this Law, this Divine Truth, is made manifest to us by the Holy Scripture, and particularly by the New Testament. And it is one of the senses of this Verse of St. Paul. *Iustitia enim Dei in eo revelatur ex fide in fidem.* But the outward revelation serves for nothing, if interiorly God does not enlighten our minds, if he doth not shine in them as Truth and Light, and if he do not there make manifest the Beauty of his Justice. Wherefore it is said, *That there was a True Light enlightning all Men coming into this World. Erat Lux Vera que illuminat omnem Hominem in hunc Mundum.* That is to say, Men are not enlightned but as far as it pleases this Divine and uncreated Light to shine in their Understandings.

VIII.

It is by following this Justice, by conforming to it, by loving and desiring it, that Just Men increase in Justice. By departing from it Men are unjust, wicked, corrupted, disordered; because this Justice is Essential Order, Essential Vertue, Essential Holiness. And as this Justice is God himself, so it is evident, that the Love of this Justice, is the Love of God, and that it is the same thing with Charity; and that

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to act by the love of Justice, is to act by Charity, and by the Principle of the love of God.

IX.

Hence we may see, that one may have Charity, and act by the dictates thereof, though he know not so much, and that sometimes one is, and acts without Charity, when he thinks himself lively moved thereby. For there are certain persons, who, finding in themselves no sensible devotion towards the Humanity of our *Lord Jesus Christ*, and reading sometimes the story of his Passion, without any tender feelings or favour, imagine they love him not, because their love is not accompanied with this sensible devotion. But, if these self-same Persons have in great horror sin and injustice, if they love the Law and Justice of God, if they esteem that Righteous and Holy, if they effectually yield obedience to it, and not sin, should God even promise them impunity: They truly love **JESUS CHRIST** as God, because he is this Justice, this Wisdom, this Eternal Law which they love. On the contrary, there are some, who feel in themselves sensible motions, for **JESUS CHRIST**, who shed tears when they read what he had suffered for us; and never-

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vertheless have no true love for God, because they love not *Justice* and *Judgment*, as the Scripture speaks; they are not pierc'd through with a certain sentiment, which makes us feel the Law of God as all amiable, all just, and which makes us submit with all willingness and love.

X.

With these thoughts, with this sentiment *David* was lively touch'd, when in his Lay *Psalms*, he cries out, The Law of God is all pure; by its Beauty drawing Souls to it. *Lex Domini immaculata, convertens Animas.* The Ordinances of God are Faithful, they never deceive their Followers: They give Wisdom, not to the Proud who resist, but to the Humble who submit. *Testimonium Domini fidele, sapientiam prestans parvulis.* The Justices, that is, the all Equitable Wills of our Lord, are Rightness it self, and they fill Souls with Joy. *Justitie Domini Recte, letificantes Corda.* His Commandments are full of Light, and clear the Eyes of the Soul. *Præceptum Domini Lucidum, illuminans Oculos.* The Fear of our Lord is Holy; it passes not away like that of Men, it endures for ever. *Timor Domini Sanctus, permanens in sæculum sæculi.* The Judgments of God are Truth it self, they
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are just of themselves. *Judicia Domini Vera, justificata in semetipsa.* They are to be desir'd above all the Riches of the World, and are sweeter than the most delicious Honey. *Desiderabilia super Aurum pretiosum multum, & dulciora super Mel & fanum.* All these expressions come from a Soul transported with the Beauty of the Law of God, of his Justice, of his Righteousness, of his Sweetness; and which strains it self to express the motions it feels, the motions God causes in it, at the same time he makes this his Divine Law shine and sparkle in its Spirit.

XI.

The Church is so fully perswaded, that this Love of the Law of God is the foundation of Christian Piety, that therein consists true Charity, and that meditating on this Law ought to be our continual entertainment; that whereas she divides and assigns to different days the instructions of the Scripture, and the rest of the Psalms, laying no obligation on us to consider and ponder them every day, she appoints us for our daily food that admirable *Psalm*, in which *David*, in such a variety of expressions, asks of God the Knowledge and Love of his Law. And this to the end, that reciting it each hour of the day, it should

should be to us a continual admonisher, not to loose sight of this Divine Light, capable of guiding us in the darkness of this life, and without which we always go astray.

XII.

Whatever is contained in this *Psalm*, is reduced to that Prayer of St. Paul, *Dominus, quid me vis facere?* or to this Verse of another *Psalm*. *Doce me facere voluntatem tuam, quia Deus meus es tu.* Teach me to do thy Will, because thou art my God. All the Verses of this wonderful *Psalm* say but the same thing, though in different expressions. As for Example, when the Prophet in the beginning says: *Beati immaculati in via, qui ambulant in lege Domini.* He acknowledges to God Almighty, that he admires the happiness of those who observe his Law; and so makes known the desires he has to imitate them. Now this desire made known to God Almighty, is a Prayer, by which he begs Grace to know his Law, and strength to fulfill it. So when he declares, that those who sin, do not walk in Gods ways. *Non enim qui operantur iniquitatem in viis ejus ambulaverunt.* It is as if he cast a look of anger on the life of disorderly people, and a look of love and holy jealousy on that of the good: And

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this two fold regard ; containing in it the love of Justice, and a hatred of Injustice or Sin, is a double Prayer , whereby he begs of God the Knowledge and Love of his Law. It would be easie for me thus to run over all the other Verses, to shew that they all aim at the same Mark.

XIII.

The frequent repetition of the same Prayer, shews evidently there is none more important ; wherefore it is good to look into the bottom of it, and to know of what extent it is : And this we may learn from the manner St. Paul has exprest it in, saying, *Lord, what wouldst thou have me to do ? Domine, quid me vis facere ?* First, 'tis remarkable, he demands not of God what in general is to be done, or what a Christian is obliged to do ; but he asks what he himself in particular ought to do. His desire is not only to be instructed in the common duties, but also in the particular ones. For certain Laws of God are in some sort general, because they ought to be kept by all ; and there are others particular, relating to each ones peculiar and different disposition. Every one hath received some gift from God Almighty proper to himself ; and we must have a care not to desire to serve God in
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the gift proper to another. God expects not from all the same things. What is a Vertue in one, may be a Vice in another. In some sort every one of us have a different way allotted to lead us to God, and our Prayer must be, that he not only would make known to us the common road, but also the path particularly appointed us. *Domine, quid me vis facere?*

XIV.

These words may be a preservative for us against a deceit ordinary amongst persons of Piety, which is to think little on their own obligations, and much on those of others: There are some well skill'd in the duties of Kings, Great Ones, Masters, Servants; who know what the Confessarius, the Penitent, what the Rich and the Poor ought to do, but are ignorant of what is to be done by themselves, They are busie people in other mens affairs, but mind not their own. They are full of words to edifie and instruct others, but for themselves, they are poor and barren of all. The reason is, they do not sincerely pray to God, that he would make known unto them what he would have them to do. For one of the first Lights he would give them, would be to apply their thoughts much about themselves, and little about

others. *Et quæ præcipit tibi Deus illa cogita semper.* Think always on that, which God hath commanded thee to do, says the Wise Man. There is therefore no time left us to think on what others are commanded to do, unless God himself commands us to think thereon; and that even these thoughts of ours, make up a part of our own devoirs, and that they are a help for us to comply more faithfully therewith. For it is not absolutely evil to make the obligations of others, part of our own meditations; but we must not stick there, we must apply to our selves what we find to be the duties of others.

XV.

There is almost no knowledge of any thing so peculiarly belonging to others, which makes us not understand some duty and obligation peculiar to our selves, and which may not be reduced into practice for our edification, had we the same care to draw profit from the Spiritual Riches passing through our Souls, as the covetous have to gain by those Temporal ones passing through their hands,

We are, for Example, acquainted with the dangers which attend the condition of great Ones, the multitude of obligations wherewith they are charged, and the difficulties they

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they meet in acquitting themselves. Let us thank God he hath not made us Great. Let us pray for those that are, let us give God thanks for such as comply with their condition, let us admire their Vertues, let us grow better by their Example, and humbler by comparing our selves to them. We know the difficulties waiting on Priesthood: Let this thought extinguish in us all desires of a condition so high, and so dangerous: Let it prompt us to beg of God, that he would bestow on his Church Holy Priests, that he would Sanctifie those that are. We have some *Items* to take notice of the disorder of several Monasteries; let this provoke us to lament before Almighty God, and entertain sentiments of fear; for they are so many marks of Gods wrath on his Church, whose sad effects we also ought to stand in dread of; by humiliation and pennance we have not a care to prevent them. Thus whatsoever we know of others, will be profitable to our selves, and these knowledges, instead of making us wander out of our selves, will be a means to bring us home to our selves.

XVI.

3. St. Paul, asking of God what he would have him to do, does not ask speculative knowledges useles for the conduct

of his life: No, he asks Knowledge necessary for action. *Domine, quid me vis facere?* Hence we learn, that the Lights and Knowledge it is lawful for us to beg and look for at the hands of God Almighty, are those for action, those that are necessary for the guidance of our steps. *Lucerna pedibus meis verbum tuum, & lumen semitis meis.* We ought not to ask of God that we may see far about us; it suffices to see where we ought to set our feet, and that God make his Will known to us, still as we are to execute it.

The farther we cast our sight, the less clearly do we see the way we walk in. And for this reason it is the Wise man tells us, That true Craft consists in knowing ones own, not the ways of others. *Sapientia Callidi est intelligere viam suam;* and that the Crafty Man is always employed in considering carefully where he shall place his steps; *Astutus considerat gressus suos.*

XVII.

But this way we out to know, these steps we ought to guide, do not only point out the exterior actions, which we are to regulate according to the Laws of God; but also the interior motions of our Soul. For the Heart hath its steps, its way, and these are nothing but its affections, that
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is to say, its desires, its fears, its hopes ; which we ought endeavour to render conformable to the Law of God, by loving only what that approves of, and rejecting what that condemns.

XVIII.

Lastly, St. *Paul* demands of God in general, that he would make his Will known to him, *Domine, quid me vis facere?* he expects nothing. He offers God a Heart prepar'd to put in execution all his Orders: and hereby teaches us, that, when we beg to know Gods Will, we must have a sincere desire to know it wholly, and that we ought not to have in our hearts certain wilfull reserves, by which we wish not to know it in some particular point, lest we should thereby be oblig'd to execute it. For, one of the greatest and commonest defects of Men, is, not to desire to know Gods Will, even then when they seem with greatest order to beg the Grace of knowing it. We have almost all of us certain defects, which we would not have touch'd, and which we hide as much as possible from God, and from our selves. And for this reason St. *Paul* doth not only wish that the *Colossians* should know the Will of God, but he wishes moreover that they should be replenished therewith, *Ut implea-*

mini agnitione voluntatis ejus: that is to say, that there should be no secret corners in their Souls, in their Hearts, where this Divine Light should not enter and shine; and that they should have no voluntary affections or tyes, which should hinder God from filling them with his Knowledge and Grace.

XIX.

How many do we see that daily spend whole hours in meditation, who, notwithstanding, never reflect on those faults, which all the world sees in them, and themselves alone are ignorant of all their life long? It is because at the first they made reserv'd Cases of them. They unfold and lay open to God all the rest of their Hearts: but they take special care not to discover that corner, where they have plac'd those imperfections they cherish. In the meantime they make general protestations, that they desire nothing more than to know the Will of God. They daily recite this Psalm, wherein this only Prayer is found; and it seems to them, they say it from the bottom of their Hearts: But, besides that Heart from which they pronounce these Prayers, they have another that disavows them; they have one Heart for God, and another for themselves. They have one, desirous,

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sirous of obeying God, in some things not very troublesome; they have another, which being ty'd to certain other things, will not know that they are evil. And thus they are to be numbered amongst those the Wise Man threatens in these words. *Vae duplici Corde. Woe to those that have a double Heart*: And amongst those of whom he says, They shall not prosper; because they walk in a double path, *Cor ingrediens duabus viis non habebit successus*.

XX.

Hence we learn, that it suffices not to ask of God the Knowledge of his Will; if we beg not also this simple and single Heart, having no other desire than that of fulfilling it: Wherefore the Prophet does not only call those happy, who only own to God a desire of knowing his Will, but those who desire to sound the bottom thereof, and seek after it with their whole Heart: *Beati qui serviantur testimonia ejus, in toto Corde exquirunt eum*; who do not only limit themselves within the desire of serving God, but who can say with the same Prophet, *In toto Corde meo exquisivi te, ne repellas me a mandatis tuis*. These are those just ones, whom their simplicity guided in the right way, *Simplicitas justorum diriget eos*. Be-

cause God never fails to enlighten those who have no other desire than that of following him.

XXI.

Many there are who require Exercises of Devotion for the Morning; and which are prescrib'd them by others, according to the knowledge and motions of Piety each one hath. But none seems more natural, nor more profitable than an oblation of ones self; such as *St. Paul's* was to Almighty God for fulfilling his Will all the day; to beg of him the Grace to know it; to foresee ones own actions; to order them according to the Light and Knowledge he gives us; and to beseech him to give us strength to fulfill what he vouchsafes to let us know of his Will. For we ought not to be satisfied when we have in General ask'd of God Almighty, that he would instruct us touching our Duties; but we ought to have recourse to, and consult him on each particular action, and that not only about the exterior part thereof, but also about the interior dispositions requisite, that in the day time we may endeavour to practice them accordingly. Thus we shall observe the counsel of the Wise Man, advising us to entertain our selves with the Commandments of God from our awaking.

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ing in the Morning : *Et evigilans loquere cum eis.*

XXII.

This is properly the Idea St. *Austin* fram'd to himself of true Devotion or Piety. Wherefore having in his Third Book of the *Trinity*, a mind to give us the Pourtraiture of a Wise Man, that is a true Christian, he describes him in these words. *Let us conceive in our minds a Wise Man, whose Soul is enlightned by that Truth which is Aeternal and Immutable.* WHO CONSULTS IT ABOUT ALL HIS ACTIONS, WHO NEVER DOES OWN WHICH HE SEES NOT IN THIS TRUTH THAT HE OUGHT TO DO IT, *to the end, that obeying and submitting himself thereto, he may act and do like a Just Man.* But we ought not to fancy, that those who are not wise, that is, are not arriv'd at this degree of perfection, are thereby dispensed from consulting this Law. Their obligation is as great as that of the Wisest : Nay, they are not such, because they do not consult it, and so it is impossible they should do well ; since to do well, is nothing but to love this Law, and to submit, and follow it in all our actions.

XXIII.

XXIII.

But it ought not to suffice, that we only at the beginning of the day consult Gods Law and Justice; we must as much as possible endeavour never to loose the sight of it: And above all, when any new thing presents it self to be done which was not in the order of those we had propos'd to do; we must cast a look towards God to ask of him what he would have us to do, and to consult his Law how he would have us carry our selves in it. So that it seems one cannot frame a better Idea of Christian life and Piety, than by considering it as a life of continual attention to what God requires of us in each condition, and each action, whether exterior or interior: And that it is this disposition the Prophet tells us of, when he says, *Providebam Dominum in conspectu meo semper*. For, this regard towards God, is the regard of a Slave towards his Master, of a Son towards his Father, at once containing a sincere desire of knowing his Orders, and a preparation of Heart to follow them. Properly this Exercise is that which may be call'd *The Exercise of the Presence of God*, so much recommended to us in Books of Devotion. In fine, 'tis that which God himself recommended to *Abraham*, when
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he order'd him to walk in his Presence, *Ambula coram me & esto perfectus.* For, to walk before God; is to have God present; 'tis to consult his Law continually, and to guide ones self by his Light: For, this Light, and this Law, are but one and the same thing.

XXIV.

There is this difference betwixt exterior and interior actions, that it is much better known whether the exterior be conformable, or contrary to the Law of God, than it is of interior ones; which are often hid in the mists raised by concupiscence; so that we cannot ascertain our selves we have the bottom of our Heart in the state as God would have it, But as it is impossible for us to free ourselves of this uncertainty, so ought we not to leave off the care of regulating our exterior; the reformation of it being a means to the interior reformation of our Souls. Wherefore, though we have not yet sentiments such as we ought, we must not omit doing what we ought to do. If we find motions of Pride within, let us endeavour so much the more to shew our selves humble without: If we find any Bitterness of Heart against any one; it is the Will of God we should not have any regard thereto, but

but that we should behave our selves towards him, as if we had our Heart full of Love and Tenderness. Nor is there any Hypocrite in this manner of proceeding: Since it is grounded on Truth, and that, if it be not conformable to those motions which are on the surface of our Soul, yet is it commanded by that portion of it, which guides and rules the exterior parts of the Body.

XXV.

This is the only means to come to constant and uniform Piety; a Piety which only follows God, which consults not ones own sentiments, humour or inclinations, and which outwardly shews only such humours, such sentiments as are conformable to the deed we are doing. If the occasion happen wherein it is fit to be gay and merry, let gayity and mirth be shewn; if to be sad, let sadness appear. There are certain occasions wherein tenderness, trust, cordialness, compassion ought to be shewn: In these let us endeavour to excite in our selves such motions and sentiments, as our reason guided by the Will of God tells us, are then convenient and profitable. If it be not possible to have a lively sense thereof, at least let us bear the marks of them in our exterior; and by this means we may hope

hope God will give us the Grace to regulate our interior motions, as for the love of him we have already fram'd our exterior actions.

XXVI.

Skilful Courtiers have no humours of their own; they borrow all theirs from those they have a mind to please. 'Tis their interest which in them produces that superficial joy, that apparent sadness, those pleasant looks, that general complacency which appears without. True Piety in some sort imitates this procedure, only changing the Principle: For, whereas interest is the Rule Men of the World guide themselves by, Pious Persons take the Law of God for theirs, in which they see both the way how they ought to treat with each particular person, and the interior disposition they ought therein to have. If in themselves they feel this disposition, they cherish it; if not, they endeavour what they can to procure it; at least they imprint it in their exterior actions by little and little, to work it into their Hearts.

XXVII.

Several, who have near at hand observ'd a great Servant of God, who at present is the Ornament of the Church of *France*, say, that he hath divers looks, according

according to the variety of actions he applies himself to. He hath one for the Altar and Church, in which a profound recollection is to be observ'd; another in civil conversation, shewing chearfulness; a grave and serious one, where Authority is to be made use of; and another fit and complacent, where fit occasions require such.

XXVIII.

There is not a more excellent practice of Mortification than this, to suppress all our humours and inclinations, to level and smooth all their unevennesses, and to make only such motions appear, as reason prompts us to in every action. This Mortification is a hidden one, for none takes notice of it; it is a constant continual one, because our inclinations are always found mixt in what we do, never ceasing, whether in solitude or company, to put us by the order God hath appointed. This Mortification gives not to any subjects of complaint; the Family is unconcern'd: Physicians, whether Spiritual or Corporal, never forbid it: Nay, it even gives us leave to hide the Mortifications of our Mind under Corporal Refreshments, when Reason orders us to allow and submit our selves thereunto; moreover it makes us
lay

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lay aside certain demeanours which often contribute to nourish the vanity we take in Mortification, when we have left the practice of it.

XXIX.

Besides, nothing brings to our knowledge more acts of Vertue fit to be put in practice, than this continual attention to the Law of God, because nothing more blinds our Eyes from discovering them, than giving our selves up to the guidance of our own inclinations. 'Tis this attention which teaches us to contribute, as far as Christianity will give leave, towards the divertisement of others in conversation; to insinuate our selves into their affections, by a complacency without affectation; to suffer their importunities; to admonish them of some faults, but that by ways sweet and proportion'd to their humours; to shun crossing them to no purpose; it teaches us to hold our peace when we ought, to speak when 'tis fit; and so to comply with a number of little obligations, which are not heeded by those who guide themselves only by humour. And this is one of the Senses of that saying of the Wise Man, *Qui inquirunt Dominum advertent omnia, Who seek after God, take notice of all things.*

XXY.

XXX.

*Tis this attention to the Will of God, which makes us lead a regular, even, and uniform life, which makes us faithfully practice the same things in the same occasions. For if we propose to our selves only to serve God, with reason we shall judge our selves more conformable to his Will, if we keep to some certain order of behaviour in things indifferent, than if we quitted it out of humour or capriciousness. The less share we our selves have in things, the more reason we have to believe 'tis God we follow in doing them: And those which of themselves are equally and indifferent, become equal and different, when we add to some of them this Reason of Uniformity in the same Exercises.

XXXI.

But if this desire of guiding our selves by the will of God makes us in things indifferent, to prefer Order and Equality, before Disorder and Inequality: In like manner it frees us from an over-weaning Love for such Exercises, and makes us supple and fixible, so that we easily change them when God requires it; because, desiring nothing more than to obey him, we are equally content when we equally find means of practicing this obedience. Wherefore

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fore what Rules soever we have prefix'd our selves in things indifferent, we ought to be ready to alter them when occasions are offer'd, wherein God lets us know he expects something else at our hands, 'Tis an effect of this flexibility, when such as love their studies, cease not with care to apply themselves to civil conversation, which they affect not, when Charity requires it at their hands. This makes them in some sort loose their time, when God wills them to do so; to quit without trouble their employments; not from any fix'd and steddty designs; and to keep themselves always in the Hands of God Almighty, to undertake such things as he makes them understand, are agreeable to his Divine Will.

. XXXII.

but we must take care lest we suffer this flexibility to degenerate into irresolution; for since Men appropriate to themselves but a very small portion of their time, it is impossible they should apply themselves to any one thing, without quitting others. Now in making ones choice, things of less moment ought to give place to those of greater, and a set choice must of necessity be made; which once done, ought not easily to be chang'd. If, for Example, we cannot

cannot employ our selves about the conduct of some particular persons, and at the same time labour for the good of the Church; we are to consider whether of these two may be done with more profit; and whether is more sutable to our vocation. If we cannot distribute our attention to several studies, we ought to confine it to one, and with a good will suffer our want of skill in the rest. If we cannot satisfie so many works of Charity, we must restrain our selves to such as are within our power, having always before our Eyes the advice of the Wise Man, which ought to serve us as a Rule in many occasion, *Fili, ne in multis sint actus sui.*

XXXIII.

Hence it is easie to perceive, that the obedience practic'd amongst Religious, is rather facility found out by the Saints for observing the Law of God, than a new severity they have added to the Gospel. For it is never lawful for one, in what condition soever, to make concupiscence the rule of his actions, or to guide himself by his own proper will, and capricious humour. The Will of God ought always to be our Rule, whether in things of the greatest importance, or of the least concern. Now it being sometimes a matter
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of difficulty to know this Will of God, and our own being often ready to take its place; the Saints have introduc'd this subjection to a superior, to the end Religious Persons may determinately know what to do in things indifferent: For thus the Will of God made as if it were more sensible, it being certain, that the Religious ought to obey their Superiors in things of this nature; whereas those who are under none, are more put to it to know what it is God in the like occasions requires them to do.

XXXIV.

If we have a Heart simple and right, we shall clearly see what the Will of God is, even in the least occasions; Nature and Concupiscence only hides it from us. To this end St. Paul admonishes us to renew our Spirit, that we may know the Will of God. *Renovamini in novitate sensus vestri ut probetis quæ sit Voluntas Dei bona, bene placens & perfectæ.* If therefore we perceive, that we do not discover what is the Will of God, we ought to believe it is, because we are not renewed; it is because we live the Life of *Adam*; that is, because we think only on the things of this World, because our Heart is full of the love of this World, and void of the
love

love of God, from whence springs the renewing of the Soul.

XXXV.

We must not fancy to our selves, because we have not made Vows to practice the several Duties of a Religious Life, we are therefore dispensed from such as conserve and increase Piety. The declaration God makes of his will in this particular, is general, when he says, *Hæc est Voluntas Dei, sanctificatio vestra.* This declaration obliges us to work and endeavour without intermission our own Sanctification; and to lay hold on all means proper for that end, and which are taught us by this very Law or Will of God. So that if we are not plac'd under the conduct of a Master of Novices, whose task it is to exercise us in Vertue, not under that of a Ghostly-Father, whose Charity does us the same good Office; yet ought the Law of God to stand us in stead of both these, and thence we ought to draw such exercises, and such practises, as are proper to heal our Sores, and advance us in the way of Salvation.

XXXVI.

This desire of knowing the Will of God, has a particular relation to the present time: For though sometimes we may foresee

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see what we ought to do hereafter, yet must we never take care of that, but when it is our present duty to think thereon. So that one may say, the way of Truth, and the way of Life, consist in considering what God requires we should do in the present instant, and in putting it in practise forthwith; that is, in praying, when God Wills us to pray; in suffering, when God would have us to suffer; in being in action, when God requires we should; in employing our thoughts either about the future, or about our selves, or about others, when God orders they should be so employed.

XXXVII.

There is in this World no condition so unhappy, nor so disorderly, which we may not, in the present instant leave, to replace our selves in the rank and order God appoints us; nor is there any so Happy, so Holy, so Conformable to the Will of God, which we may not also loose every moment. There is a Line drawn from each degree, and each condition towards God; as soon as we come to tread on this Line, we are in the order he appoints. If we are in sin, the Line which leads towards God, is to renounce it, to resolve to lay hold on all the necessary means of quitting it,

it, and at the same time to fall a practicing such as seem to be most according to Gods order. If we have enter'd unduly into any Office, and that it is necessary to leave it, and we may immediately do so, we betake our selves to the order God hath appointed, if effectually we quit it. But if Prudence permits not that we free our hands of it so soon, it is sufficient we do it in desire; and then, though we have enter'd on it contrary to the order of God, yet is it not contrary thereunto, that we continue; since it is now no more our own, but his Will which keeps us there,

XXXVIII.

Thus not only the Just, who consulting the Law of God here at the bottom of their Hearts, an answer of Peace, as the Prophet said, *Audiam quid loquatur in me Dominus Deus, quoniam loquetur pacem in plebem suam*; nor the Saints, *Et super Sanctos suos*: But also the greatest sinners, provided they enter into themselves, and turn towards God, *Et in eos qui vertuntur ad Cor.* This Divine Light shews to all a way of Peace. It is true, this way is more rugged to some than others, and often it appears to those who are immerst in sin, so uneven and precipitious, that they despair of being able to walk therein. But provided

provided they will but use violence to themselves, it is not impossible but they too may walk in it: For, this same Light which discovers to them the way, shews them also the succour which they may obtain by their Prayers, and which can give them Strength greater than their own weakness.

XXXIX.

The consideration of Gods Will, as Justice, constitutes the Piety of true Christians here on Earth, and will make up the Eternal Happiness of the Blessed in Heaven. In this contemplation consists that torrent of pleasures wherewith they will be inebriated: For, their Sovereign delight shall be to find nothing in themselves opposite to the Justice of God Almighty, and in being in a perfect subjection to him. Their Glory shall be, that this Justice rules over them: And thus shall their Charity be all pure, because they shall not refer God to themselves, but themselves to God, and God alone they shall love in themselves. Wherefore St. *Austin*, expressing the state of the Blessed in Heaven, says, *That they shall continually annihilate themselves in the Presence of God, preferring him before themselves by an Eternal Love.*

XL.

But, which is strange, by an effect quite contrary, what God shall make known of his Justice to the wicked, shall be their greatest torment, and shall be that which will throw them head-long into Hell. For as a Holy Woman, to whom God had imparted great Light, says, *A Soul is no sooner separated from the Body, but it goes straight to its proper place: And if being dead, it should not find that out, which the Decrees of Gods Justice hath prepared for it, its Hell would be a thousand times greater, because it would see it self out of the order and disposition of God: Finding therefore for it self no place more proper, or less painful than Hell, it casts it self head-long thither as to its Center, and the place most convenient for it.*

XLI.

Not because a damn'd Soul loves this Justice, but because this Justice being known, confounds and convinces it of its own unworthiness, a thing it cannot suffer. there is a Knowledge of God which incites us to unite our selves to him, and to lay our selves open to the Light of his Divine Eyes. There is another, which makes us fly from him, and with-

withdraw our selves as much as we can out of his Presence. *Adam* and *Cain* had experience of this impulse after their sins; the one being induced thereby to hide himself in Paradise, the other to wander like a Vagabond in the World, thinking so to out-run the remorse of Conscience, which gave him no repose. This sentiment annex'd to sins, is not a sentiment of fear and horreur, but one of rage and despair. We cannot endure the sight of him whom we have offended, whom we hate; because it continually upbraids us with our faults. We would destroy him if we could; but since we cannot, we shun him, and hide our selves from him to our power. The sentiment is weak in this life, where we but imperfectly apprehend the deformity of sin; but in the next it shall be without limits, when our sins shall shoot out their Thorns, as *St. Austin* speaks, and our sides shall be pierced therewith.

XLII.

It is therefore out of this sentiment, that the Damned should precipitate themselves into Hell, as a place the most darksome, and remotest from God, and where they shall be less pierc'd by

the penetrating Rays of his Justice. There is too much light for them in any place else, and their Eyes cannot suffer that light they hate.

The greatest torment we can inflict on those who have sore Eyes, is to expose them to a full light, and force them to look on it. The greatest Hell of the Damned would be to force them to appear in the Light of the Saints, and to shew them on one side their Glory, Gods Love towards them; on the other, their own deformity, and the hatred God bears them.

Thus their greatest desire is, to hide themselves as much as possible they can from this killing light.

The prospect of Gods Justice joyn'd to his Mercy and Love, brings comfort and ease; but that of this same Justice joyn'd to his hatred, is what kills and leads to despair.

XLIII.

We may be mov'd by Pride to quit a place whereof we are not worthy: *Judas* was not humble when remorse for his sin made him judge himself unworthy to live. He could not suffer the reproach of his unworthiness, And to shun



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Shun it, he left his life. In the same manner the Damned freely leave all the other places they are unworthy of, to shun the sight of that penetrating Light, convincing them of their crimes, and chasing them before it, as the Angel chased *Adam* out of Paradise.

They cannot suffer to be out of Gods Order; not because they love his Order, but because they cannot bear the interior reproach of their own disorder.

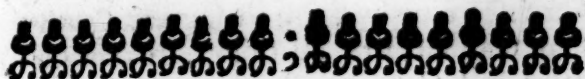
XLIV.

Hell therefore is the Center of the Damned, as Darkness is the Center of them who fly the Light. It is the place where the Light of God inconveniences them the least, where the reproaches of their Consciences are least sensible, and where their Pride suffers the least confusion. So it is a kind of refreshment to them to be there. If they could, they would destroy God, and his Order, but they know they cannot; therefore they hide themselves in the Abyss of Hell, and they could wish that there were a greater *Chaos* betwixt God and them, to shelter themselves, if possible, from the Rays of

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that Truth which descends and pierces
their sight, even in the depths of that
Abyfs.

*The End of the First Part of the Se-
cond Treatise.*

Second



Second P A R T.

O F

The Second Treatise.

*Of Submission to the Will
of God.*

I.

WE have newly seen the first way of considering the Will of God containing in some sort the whole life of a Christian ; since it contains the Knowledge and Love of Gods Law. But even this prospect shewing us this Law, as the rule of our actions, of it self leads us to a Submission to the Will of God, consider'd, as the cause of whatsoever happens in this World, sin excepted, which he only permits : And this is the second way, according to which we

F 4 have

have said Gods will ought to be consider'd. For discerning by Faith these great Truths, that God Creates all things, that he Ordains and Governs all, that nothing happens without his Providence, that in whatsoever comes to pass in the World, he either exercises his Justice or Mercy, that no Creature hath any power but what he bestows, that all are either the Instruments or Ministers of his Decrees, and according to the expression of Scripture, but as *an Ax in the hand of him that cuts, or as a Staff in the hand of him that strikes*: We see also at the same time, in the same Will, consider'd as Supreme Justice; that it is fit he should reign, and we obey; that it is his part to guide, and ours to follow; that we ought to conform our selves to his Will, and not desire that he should submit to ours; that his Will being always Just, always Holy, it is also always Adorable, always worthy of our Submission and Love, though the effects thereof sometimes prove harsh and troublesome: For, only such Souls as are unjust can find fault with what Justice it self does; and so the troubles we sometimes feel, to submit to it, is only a proof of our own injustice and corrupt Nature; which should make us lay the blame, not on God, but our selves, saying

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saying with the Prophet, *Nunc Deo sub-*
jecta erit Anima mea? O my Soul, wilt thou
not submit thy self to God?

II.

But to fix our selves in this Submission,
to which even Justice it self obliges us, it
is good often to regard and consider this
Will of God, as it operates in the World,
and acts through all the Creatures. For
the cause in part of that dissatisfaction we
feel in what happens to us, springs from
our stopping at, and not looking beyond
the Creatures, and in that we impute to
them the events of things. We only take
notice of the Rod that strikes and chastis-
ses us, we see not the hand that manages
it. If we discern'd God every where, and
look'd on him through the Veil of his Crea-
tures, if we saw that it is he who gives them
all the force they have, that it is he who
drives them forward to do what is good,
and who in what is evil diverting their
malice from such objects whither it might
carry them, gives it no other liberty than
such as serves to put in execution his Eter-
nal decrees; the sight of his Justice and
Majesty would give a check to our com-
plaints, our murmurings and impatiences.
In his presence we durst not say, we de-
serve not what we suffer; we should have

no other sentiments than those which made Holy David say, *I held my peace, I was humbled, because thou didst this. Obmutui & humiliatus sum, quoniam tu fecisti.* But we are pleas'd, when from our Eyes we can hide these Truths, that we may have some pretence to ease our selves, and discharge our ill humours on the Creatures; that we may complain of their injustice; that we may think our selves in the right, and be perswaded, that we suffer wrongfully what is inflicted on us.

III.

Did we fix the Eyes of our Soul on this first and Sovereign cause of all events, we should see the whole face of things in some sort chang'd as to us; that is, we should be oblig'd thereby to alter the greatest part of the Notions and Idea's we have fram'd to our selves of what passes there. We should find none oppress'd who were innocent; we should only see the guilty punished. The World no more to us would be a place of disorder and jars; it would only be one of Justice and Equity. We shou'd acknowledge that nothing is taken from any, but what he deserves to loose, that none suffers above his deserts, that justice and strength are always joyn'd there together, whereas injustice is always weak and impotent;

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tent; we should see no evils, no misfortunes, but only just chastisements of Mens sins; that none dyed here either by the necessity of Nature, or the accidents of Fortune, but that Men deserving death are punish'd therewith, and that in time and circumstances most suitable. In fine, that all here is Equitable and Holy, as well in respect of God ordaining all things, as Men on whom his decrees are executed. Only the Ministers of this over-ruling Will can be guilty of injustice; yet cannot their injustice hinder what they do from proving just and equitable to those who suffer it.

IV.

Taking our measures from this Idea, what is an Army? 'Tis a Troop of Executioners of Gods Justice, which he sends to kill those who have deserved to dye, and whom he hath condemn'd to this punishment. What are two Armies fighting together? They are the Ministers of this Divine Justice, punishing one another, and precisely executing nothing but what God hath order'd. What is Murder? 'Tis the punishment of a Criminal by the hand of an unjust Minister. What are Thieves? They are certain people, unjustly executing the just decree, whereby God has order'd

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der'd certain persons should be depriv'd of their Goods? What is a King? He is a scourge in the Hands of God for punishment of the wicked.

V.

'Tis only this prospect that lays before our Eyes Gods Empire over the World, and his eminent power over all his Creatures. Should we otherwise look on things, it would seem that the malice of Men had the upper hand of God himself, at least for a time, and that their Iniquity overcame his Justice. Wherefore we may believe that the Prophet, upon this contemplation of Gods Infinite Power, guiding all things to the Ends his Mercy and Judgment hath set, cries out: That *God hath Reign'd, that he hath clad himself with Beauty and Force.* Nothing but a contemplation of Gods Providence being capable of making us to see Order and beauty in that confusion the World is in, and of discovering to us Gods Supreme Empire over it, maugre the violence of unjust Men contemning and slighting his Will and Laws.

VI.

The recital of things pass'd is but in some sort, to such as consider the World:
by

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by a Light purely Humane, History of the Devil, and the Reprobates; because the persons acting most on the Theater of the World, and who have the greatest share in all the accidents whereby it is kept in motion, are, for the most part, the Citizens of *Babylon*, in whom the Devil dwells, and by whom he acts. But to those who carry their contemplation higher, all History in some sort is the History of God; because they only find in it the execution of his Will, the decrees of his Justice, and the effects of his Power. All there tends to edification, because all there is just and equitable.

VII.

Time pass'd is an Abyss without bottom, swallowing and devouring all things transitory; that to come is another, to us impenetrable. One of these Abysses continually flows into the other; the time to come discharges it self into the time past, by gliding through the present. We are plac'd betwixt these two Abysses: For we perceive and are aware how the time to come flows into what is pass'd; and this makes the present time, as what is present makes up all our life. What is past, is no more; and what's to come, is not yet at all. Hence observe what our condition

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dition is. What therefore we ought to do, is to undertake that part which God for the present assigns us, looking on what's past, and what's to come, according as God requires we should.

VIII.

For although what's past ceases to be in respect of us, and what's to come, is not yet; yet both the one and the other exist in respect of God. His Will grasps all time. What's past, is so, because he decreed it should be at a certain time; and what's to come, will be because he hath assigned another time for it. Thus his Will comprehends, and in some manner makes Holy all events whatsoever, whether past or to come. In his Will we find them altogether, and as that is always adorable, we are obliged by it to look with veneration on all events, whether past or future; for that tye and dependance they have on this Divine Will.

IX.

There is this difference betwixt things past, and to come, that as we know in particular somewhat of the past, so we may in particular approve of it, and praise Gods Providence in its events. But as we see nothing of what's to come, and that 'tis yet hid in God, we cannot exercise the

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Part II. To the Will of God. III

Submission we owe to his Will, otherwise than by a general acceptation of all his decrees, which we ought always to regard as most Sacred and most Just.

X.

What's past, and what's to come, being so strictly ty'd to the Will of God, at the first sight one would think that Faith in us could only raise sentiments of Veneration and Submission for both the one and other; and that even in respect of things present, which depend not on us, we ought to have the like sentiments and approbation. But if this be so, what will become of that penitential sorrow, we have for our sins past? What of that tenderness and compassion, whose principal object is the present troubles and miseries? What will become of that prudent Forecast, by which we endeavour to prevent and shun them? Must we be afraid lest God exercise his Justice? Must we take on, and afflict our selves for what he either does himself, or permits to be done? Does not God when he permits Evil, think it better to permit than hinder it, as with ease he could? And if his thoughts are such, should not ours be conformable to his? How near is the shallow Wit of Man, and prone here to draw that blasphemous conclusion
which

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which was falsely imputed to St. Paul, That Mens sins were not to be condemn'd, since God thereby was glorifi'd. *Quid adhuc tanquam Peccator judicor?*

XI.

But these difficulties arise only from our not considering the Will of God in its full extent, from our separating his Will consider'd as Justice, and the Rule of all things, from the same Will consider'd as their Cause and Principle. For let us joyn together these two considerations, and we shall find, that God permits sin only by that Will which is the Cause of things, whilst at the same time he condemns and hates the same by his Will, consider'd as Justice, to which sin is contrary and opposite: Whilst he punishes sinners for their Crimes by his Will consider'd as operative, and the Cause of Beings, at the same time, he makes it known by his Eternal Law, that these Crimes are contrary to that Justice which is nothing but that self-same Will. Thus the effects of his Justice at once imprint in our Souls a Twofold Idea, viz. that of the Will of God permitting sins, and that of the disorder of the same sins which it condemns: and these two Objects ought to raise in us two kinds of Sentiments; one by which we approve of what

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what comes from God, another by which we condemn that which comes from Man.

XII.

By thus contemplating the Will of God, we bring to an amicable agreement those sentiments which at the first sight appear so contrary and irreconcilable, as well in respect of what is past, as what's to come. We are sorry for our sins, because in God's Sovereign Justice we see them condemn'd of injustice, insolence and ingratitude. In the same Justice also we see it is but fit and equitable, that we should have these sentiments, and that we should endeavour to excite them in our selves. But knowing too that God has permitted us to fall into these sins, to the end they might serve to bring on the designs of his Providence; we cannot but adore this his Permission, because it is just. And though this knowledge ought not to take off the regret and sorrow for our faults; yet ought it to appease those troubles, those excessive unquiet griefs which otherwise they would cause: Since, in fine, it is equally just we should, (having in our prospect Gods Justice discovering to us the enormity of our sins) be sorrowful for them; and that we should cease to be troubled and vexed thereat, having

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having in sight the Will of God, who, (to the end they might serve his designs) has permitted them to happen.

XIII.

It is properly this peace, this tranquillity which proceeds from the contemplation of Gods Sovereign Will, that the Apostle wishes to all Christians, when he says, *Pax Christi quæ exuperat omnem sensum, custodiat corda vestra & intelligentias vestras*. This Peace surpasses all the other Sentiments, but does not stifle or extinguish them. They nevertheless are excited in our Hearts by the Light of Faith, discovering to us what God judges of our actions; yet, notwithstanding these Sentiments of sorrow, we cease not to be at peace within our selves, when we consider that it is a God all Just, who permitted these sins, and that he will hereafter forgive them. One of these would be lame and imperfect without the other; but, being joyn'd and united together, they frame a Penance without despair, and a Peace without presumption.

XIV.

God does not equally discover these Truths to all, and so the motions they excite have not always an equal vehemency. For Example, in this life God employs
much

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much his Saints in meditating on the opposition their sins have to the Law of God; here with the same evidence he discovers not to them the Beauty of his Divine Will, permitting these sins to happen for their Good, and his Glory. And thus the motions and resentments of Pennance, which they feel at the sight of their sins, are much more lively, much more sensible, than that comfort they receive from the hope they have that God one day will out of these very faults extract his own Glory, and their Salvation. On the other side, in the next World, the Saints shall be so thoroughly possess'd with Joy, that they have contributed towards Gods Glory, and so fill'd with admiration of his Providence, which through the ways they have gone, has guided them to Heaven, that they shall be no more capable of resenting the least sorrow for their past offences.

XV.

Neither ought this consideration of Gods Will make us insensible of the evils of our Neighbour. It is true, nothing happens to them but what is right and just; but we see in this same Will consider'd as Law, as Justice, as Truth; that Mankind is not in the state he was created for;

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for ; that these evils spring not from Nature, as it was instituted, but from its disorder ; that they are not conformable to the first order of God, nor to his first inclination, which is all for goodness. In this Will of God we see the ties which unite us to those miserable ones, and which ought to induce us to love them. There also we see that it is but just, we should love them, we should desire to succour and help them, we should be troubled at their Evils, and that God does approve we should ask and beg of him those succours and helps they stand in need of. It is impossible all these thoughts should not excite in us sentiments of Compassion ; and that other consideration of Gods Will, by which he chastises Men by these Evils, ought only to stand us in stead to moderate these resentments, not to stifle, and quite take them away.

XVI.

In fine, the consideration of Gods Will, as doing all, as carrying on all for his own Glory, ought not also to hinder those just fore-sights we ought to have for the future, because we know that the Law of God ordains us to use all reasonable care and precaution to prevent certain accidents, and to procure others, leaving ne-

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vertheless the success to his Providence, and paying a general Submission to his decrees. *St. Paul* desir'd to go and Preach the Gospel at *Rome*, nay he laid the design; but it was with submission to, and dependance on the Will of God. In laying the design, he obey'd the Will of God as a Law and Rule: In submitting the execution thereof to the Will of God, he obey'd him as the Sovereign cause of all things according to the same Rules of his Eternal Justice. For, it is (as we have said) Justice it self which obliges us to submit our selves in all events to his Holy Will.

XXVII.

The life of Faith therefore, which is the life of the Just, obliges them to submit themselves to the common dictates of humane Prudence, and to make use of humane means, to bring those things to pass which they may reasonably desire; because this Faith forbids us to tempt God. And this other consideration of Gods absolute Will, as governing and doing all, only serve to comfort us when things fall out contrary to our desire, and ought not to give us occasion of rashly fore-telling what's to come, or guiding our actions by certain Prophetick Instincts, which for
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the most part are only the effects of our imagination, on which God has forbid us to rely. We know not whether it is Gods Will there should be Peace or War. Whether such and such disorders should have an end or no. Whether he will make his designs succeed by this or that means; yet ought we not to intermit our endeavour for procuring peace, and remedying disorders, nor cease to use such means as we judge proper for the ends we aim at, leaving nevertheless the success to God Almighty.

XVIII.

This same reason ought to make us very reserv'd and cautious, in taking for Marks of Gods Will our lighting in Scripture, or other Books of Devotion, on certain places which seem to us conformable to some thoughts and designs we have in our heads. For though it be certain we light not on these places, but because it is Gods Will; yet is it not certain we should happen on them for such a purpose, or that they ought to serve us as a Rule to guide ourselves by. 'Tis our Fancy that draws this consequence, and that rashly; because it supposes God could not have permitted such a hit but for such an end. On the contrary, who knows but he may have permitted it

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as a tryal, whether we would with constancy walk in the way of Faith, adhering to the common Rules of Prudence: Or whether we would give our selves over to the motions of vanity, which so naturally are raised in us, when we imagine God does us peculiar favours, and places us above the ordinary rank of Men, to whom he makes his Will known only by the general documents of Scripture, and the ordinary instructions of the Church? It seems therefore not good to build much on these casual hits, and that touching them, we ought to fear what the Scripture says of Dreams, *Ubi multa sunt somnia plurima sunt vanitates.* For, the vanity of Dreams consists, not in concluding that God is the cause of such a Dream, which is always true in some sense; but in applying such and such a signification thereunto. Now the like vanity is to be found in our judgments, when we think God has such designs in permitting such accidents.

XIX.

The consideration then of Gods absolute Will, does not make any alteration in the ordinary way of judging of things; nor cuts it off the application of humane means, or the use of humane knowledge
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and insight. But, it restrains all unquiet, over-hasty, and too vehement wishes for things not yet come to pass, and all trouble and melancholly for such as are either present or past. For, if we be fully persuaded, that God does all things, and that he can do nothing but what is just, having given such order about our affairs, as he commands we should, we ought totally to deliver our selves up to him, and in peace expect the accomplishment of his Eternal design. And as these deserve our adoration, when by the event they become manifest to us, so also no less do they even beforehand deserve the same, whilst they lie hid amongst the secrets of his Providence.

XX.

It is true, that amongst these events some are the effects of his Mercy, others of his Justice. But as Mercy and Justice are equally adorable, an equal submission is due to both; but with this difference: The submission paid to the effects of Mercy, ought ordinarily to be accompanied with joy and thanks: That to those of Justice with humiliation and terror.

XXI.

It is often impossible amongst humane
ancients

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accidents to distinguish the effects of his Mercy from those of his Justice; because our Soul is too narrow to comprehend that infinite Chain of Causes so linked together; that sometime the greatest evils are fastened to what seems the greatest good; and on the contrary, the greatest good to what seems the greatest evil. So that having according to the dictates of ordinary Prudence done what is in our power, not only Faith, but Reason it self obliges us to an indifferency, as to the event, because by it we know that our skill is too short, too narrow to frame a right and sound judgment thereof.

XXII.

To the end we may be innur'd to a Submission to Gods Will in affairs of greatest importance, able to shake and dismay the Soul; we must begin and accustom our selves to honour and respect it in the least circumstances of our lives; because that rules those as well as the greatest. Nay, in looking on these small things as effects of Gods Sovereign Will, faith is more fully exercised: Because Men feel more difficulty in attributing to God ordinary and petty events, than great ones. One therefore thoroughly possess'd with this thought, will never say such an accident is troublesome,

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some, because looking on it as ordain'd by God, 'tis not allow'd him to be troubled at it. He will never complain of a meeting disappointed, of an unseasonable visit, of his servants loitering, of his being made wait too long, or being refused some favour: No little loss, no unseasonableness of the weather, nor generally any of those ordinary occurrences of life, which usually cause impatience in others, will discompose him.

XXIII.

With this self-same disposition ought every one to suffer his corporal defects; as deafness, weakness of sight, and generally whatsoever may render one contemptible in the sight of Men; as want of memory, want of address and wit, want of temporal goods, meanness of Birth: And that without ever complaining thereof; as well because these come from the Hand of God, as because we know not whether they be not more for our advantage, than those other qualities, which would please us better; Nay, we know not but that in suffering these wants in this manner, they will become really more beneficial. The same is to be said of diseases, calumnies, evil treatments, the small esteem the World has for

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for us, the hatred and prejudices it may have against us. Because God Almighty either does or permits all this; we must look on it with a calm and peaceful Eye, keeping our selves in the rank he has put us, and adoring his decrees. And the Will of God which governs all these things, ought to have more power over our Souls, to make us cheerfully accept thereof, and render them amiable to us; then whatever they have of ungrateful, to make us reject the same, and carrying us on to impatience and murmur.

XXIV.

Certain accidents are the necessary consequences of our own sins; if these consequences prove favourable, they administer to us a peculiar cause of praising the Mercy and Bounty of God, who could draw good from evil, and change into means of saving us, that which only deserv'd chastisement, and the withdrawing of his Graces. But if these consequences be troublesome and hard, as when our sins have involv'd us in great evils, Spiritual or Temporal, if our disorders have been the cause of many Crimes, if these consequences continue, and are propagated; then ought we not to look on them without sorrow. For the Will of

God consider'd as Justice, commands us to grieve, to humble our selves, and do penance for such, and to endeavour to give a stop to these bad consequences, by our better Deeds and Prayers: But, at the same time it commands us to be calm and quiet, without trouble, without anxiety, and to comfort our selves by the consideration of his Will that has permitted them, and will certainly draw his Glory out of them.

XXV.

No sin hath had so sad a consequence as that of our first Parents; since all the evils that have falln on Mankind, all the sins that the whole World hath committed, and the damnation of that innumerable number of reprobates, are the effects of it: Yet the Will of God has not been wanting to comfort them in it; and if it did not take from them all sorrow, whilst they remain'd in this World, because it was but just and reasonable they should do penance for their faults; yet hath it quite extinguish'd all grief in the other; since, maugre those dreadful consequences of their sin, which shall continue for all Eternity, *Adam* and *Eve* for ever enjoy that peace and consolation which belongs to the Just. And this is the greatest Example imaginable of what

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what the contemplation of Gods Will can do towards appeasing those troubles which naturally ought to spring from the consequences of our sins; and having seen this, what ill effects soever our faults can have had, whatever disorders they have caused, none ought to loose his hope, nor give himself over to grief out of a certain kind of despair.

XXVI.

Gods Will thus consider'd, not only makes us suffer with peace and calmness the effects of our sins, but also to bear with patience our own defects and imperfections, as well as those of others. And thus it causes a good agreement betwixt those two so seemingly opposite sentiments; the thirst and zeal of Justice, which makes us hate our sins, and that patience which makes us suffer them: because we see that God hath prescrib'd us both. The Soul resign'd to God says indeed to him in the sense of her miseries, *Lord how long wilt thou suffer me to continue in this state? Sed tu me Domine usque quo?* Mean while leaves not to be at peace in it: She resolves to make the term of her Life to be that of her Patience, and at once to wage a continual war against imperfections, and nevertheless to bear with her self, and

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them, without ever giving her self over to discouragement; whilst she is content with that measure of Grace, God is pleased to give her: And this is it she learns from that advice of the Wise Man. *Qui timeant Dominum, custodiant mandata ipsius, & patientiam habebunt usque ad inspectionem ipsius.*

XXVII.

In fine, the greatest effects of our Submission to Gods Sovereign Omnipotent Will, is, that (in the uncertainty of his Eternal decree, touching our predestination, and of that Sentence which he shall pronounce at the hour of our Death, by which he puts in execution the former decree, and allots us either a happy or miserable Eternity) the Soul is brought by it to acknowledge that God is Just, and that she adores him as such; according to the words and mind of the Prophet, saying with him to God, *In manibus tuis sortes mee: In thy hands is my lot.* But she is very careful not to abandon her self overmuch to this thought, not to dive too far into it; the weakness of our understanding being unable to bear it. She therefore wholly applies her self to consider what God commands her to do in this respect, and what disposition he by his Truth and his Law prescribes.

XXVIII.

XXVIII.

Now in this Law she sees, first, that 'tis just she should spare her own weaknels, and not busie her self about so dreadful a thought. Secondly, that we have no reason to think that this decree will not prove favourable to her, since God by many Graces has call'd her out, and seperated her amongst so many Infidels, so many Hereticks, so many others who never think on God ; and has plac'd her amongst those few of the Faithful in his Church, who know his Law, and have some desire to observe it. In this Truth she sees, that instead of busying her self unprofitably with thoughts of distrust, which cannot but do her harm, she ought solely to endeavour to correct faults, to provide remedies against the future ; to put her self into the way of God, if she be not already there, and to walk faithfully in it, if she be.

XXIX.

She sees that Gods Will is, she should nourish and keep alive her hope by all the just means Truth furnishes her with ; and that above all she take heed not to look on God Almighty as an Enemy, having no love or kindness for her. For this Idea is false, and execrable even in respect of the

damned themselves. *God made not Death,* says the Scripture, *and he takes no pleasure in the loss of the Living.* If his Creatures depart from him, it is, by making themselves unworthy of the effects of his goodness, and by their wilful malice obliging him to shew them those of his Justice. God never wants the Bowels of Mercy to receive sinners, if they be converted, and return to him. Like a Father he has always his Bosom open to receive them, and it is always their fault if they convert not themselves. It is true, that by a secret Justice God thinks himself not bound to change the corrupted will of the reprobates; but this Will of Justice in him does not destroy that Essential Goodness, which is the very Law and Will of God himself, which makes him ready to receive into favour every converted sinner, forsaking his sins, and makes him command, that every sinner should turn and forsake them. From this Goodness springs that Patience of which *St. Paul* speaks, inviting sinners to do Penance. Let them do that, and Gods Mercy will always be open to them, and his Grace abundantly flow upon them, who stop the current, and dam it up; nevertheless all such Graces lie always ready in his Treasury.

XXX.

There is nothing then which more facilitates the conduct of Christian life, than this contemplation of Gods Will in its whole extent ; for by it we see that the whole life of a true Christian, is a life of Peace, with an even calmness, contemplating in Gods order the past, present, and future, perpetually consulting his Law, to learn from thence what is to be done every moment, and to know the interior disposition of mind we ought to have in respect of those affairs we are to employ our selves about : These dispositions become various according to the variety of Objects ; and they include all the lawful passions of joy, sadness, desire, fear, love, anger, compassion, which such Objects ought to excite, Yet are all these passions joyn'd to that general disposition of repose and peace, which the prospect of Gods Sovereign Will entertains, and nourishes in the bottom of a Christians Soul ; that Peace which calms all particular unquiet motions ; that Peace which they always enjoy who love the Law of God, as *David* says. *Pax multa diligentibus legem tuam* ; that Peace which JESUS CHRIST bequeathed to his Disciples, when he left the World, and which the World knows not.

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Pacem relinquo vobis ; non quomodo Mundus dat, ego do vobis : That Peace which the Apostle St. Paul wishes the Faithful, as we have already said, to the end it may guard their Souls and Understandings. *Custodiat eorda vestra & intelligentias vestras :* 'Tis this Peace which quiets the agitations of the Heart, whilst it fixes it to the immovable Will of God : 'Tis this Peace gives a stop to those troubles which the multiplicity of its thoughts produces in the Understanding : By this one thought 'tis Gods Will this Peace causes man to let himself be carried affectionately on by the torrent of Providence ; whilst he troubles himself no farther, than faithfully to comply with his obligation in every particular duty prescrib'd him at each Moment by the Law of God.

The End of the Second Treatise.

Third



Third Treatise.

Of the Fear of God.

Confite timore tuo carnes meas ; a iudiciis enim tuis timebo.

I.

THE Prophet is in fear, and he begs of God, that this his Fear may be increased, like to him who said, *Lord I believe, Help my incredulity.* The first effects of that Fear God infuses into our Heart, is to convince us that we fear not enough. By it we see that God is infinitely dreadful, and our fear small ; and this incites us to beg of God that he would redouble his Fear in us, and pierce our Flesh with it.

II.

It often happens that our Understanding is convinc'd that we ought to fear
God

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God, but our Heart, and the sensible part of our Soul, is for all that untouch'd therewith. Yet 'tis that Fear of the Heart, not that perswasion of our Understanding, that deads temptations, And it is for this reason that the Prophet is not satisfied with this Fear of God in his understanding, *• judiciis enim tuis timuis* but he desires that even his very Flesh should be struck through with this Fear, to the end that the lively smart thereof may stifle in it all the temptations able by their flatteries to gain on the flesh. Were we pierc'd all through with Nails, our condition would be such as the most tempting pleasures could never assail us. The Prophet therefore begs, that the Fear of God would work an effect like to this in him; that this Fear would as livelily and sensibly touch his Soul, as Nails do his Flesh, when they really and effectually pierce it through.

III.

Fear seems to be an effect of self-love. We stand in fear of the evils which befall us, because we love our selves. Why therefore is it necessary we should beg it at Gods hands? Are we not sufficiently furnish'd with self-love to fear that which may bring upon us the greatest of all evils?

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The reason is, let our self-love be never so great, it is always blind, insensible, stupid, without reason. It is sensible of things of small moment, and passes by unconcernedly those of greater : It fears without cause, and is without fear when we have all the reason in the world for that passion. It observes no order, no rule in its motions. It is totally taken up, fill'd, transported with trifles, and is often insensible of the greatest things in the World. God therefore does us a great favour, when he makes us feel things as they are in themselves : For in making us livelyly sensible of those things that are great, he deadens the too lively sense we have of such as are little.

IV.

There is in Man a prodigious sensibility, able to produce boundless motions of sadness, love, joy, fear, despair ; and an amazing insensibility, able to resist the most terrible Objects. The same things kill some, and not so much as move others; whilst the reason and cause of effects so different lie hid and unknown.

V.

These violent passions spring from an unknown root, they proceed from a hidden abyss. No body precisely knows the
Springs

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Springs he is to set on work to excite them; all we know, is, that Reason it self cannot stir them up as it would, even then when they are judged useful, no more than it can repress and quiet them, when they are judged prejudicial. When the Soul is touch'd in some insensible part, nothing is able to cause in her the least motion; let this part be a sensible one, and every thing is capable of transporting her out of her self.

VI.

The violence and irregularity of these passions, are at the same time in Man both proofs of his disorder, and marks of his greatness. By them it appears, that his mind is composed of prodigious Resorts and Springs, and that if they were lively touch'd and set on work, they would produce passions and motions quite other than such we are the most part sensible of: So that natural Philosophers understood nothing either of Mans Happiness or Misery, whilst they plac'd the one and the other in such sentiments as we are capable of during this life, Nothing is more ridiculous than to think as they did, that it is possible we should be happy by common and gross pleasures, by empty curiosities, or by a frigid contemplation of
Vertue.

Vertue and Truth. These motions are too dull and languid to make us happy; the Soul of Man is capable of a Delight, and Joy, infinitely more lively, infinitely more sensible. The same is to be said of Evils: Although we are far more sensible of these than of Pleasure; yet may they be felt a thousand times more lively, than we feel them. Now if it be not in our power to procure our selves this so lively Joy, or these so piercing Griefs; it is because God would not have our Happiness or Misery in this World depend on our selves; but has ordain'd, that both the one and the other, should be an effect either of his Mercy or Justice, in the next.

VII.

The time then of this life is properly a time of stupidity and dulness. All our knowledges here are obscure, drowsy and languid, if compar'd to what they shall be at the moment of our Death, which will (as it were) draw the Curtain to let us see things as they are. Then it will be, that all created Nature will disappear from before our Eyes, and that we shall not look upon the Kingdoms, the Principalities, the Pleasures and troubles of this World but as little motes not worthy a slight

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flight thought. God alone in that day, will appear mighty in our Eyes, according to the expression of the Scripture, *Et erit Dominus magnus in illa die.* But those whom Death shall find without Gods Love, shall see him Great, but from that Greatness shall be fill'd with terror, which will make them cast themselves into the Abyss of Hell, to hide themselves the most they can from so dreadful a Majesty: Whereas those who shall dye in his Love, and be cleansed from their sins, shall only see him Great, that they may from thence derive ineffable Sentiments of Love and Joy, which will be their Everlasting Beatitude.

VIII.

These are the considerations which ought to ground our Hopes and Fear for the other World. Yet even in this estate of dulness and stupidity we are plung'd in here, our Soul is not without certain passions, whereof some are much more vehement and lively than others: Whence she may learn, how capable she is of having quite different ones from those she ordinarily feels. Her vigour is clog'd, her motions dull'd by the weight of that Body to which she finds her self ty'd; but not always equally: She is sometimes more,
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sometimes less stupid and insensible in regard of Divine Matters; and the experience of these two differing states, gives her means to discover what it is that contributes to the raising Sentiments so different; and putting her in so ununiform a disposition.

IX.

Now there is so much the greater necessity to consider and find out the causes of this insensibility, in respect of God; because we ought to look on it as one of the greatest of all our Evils. For it is this that makes way into the Soul, for impressions of sensible Objects; which would be little able to move her, were she much concern'd and busied about things of the next Life, as she ought. Hence it is the Soul languishes, becomes weak and lazy in matters of Devotion. Hence she puts a greater value on the Goods and Evils of this World than they deserve. Lastly, from this insensibility towards God springs that sensible and lively esteem for Creatures: For the Soul cannot be without some inclination, and must always fix herself on some Object. Thus 'tis one of her chief Duties to endeavour to find out the Causes of this stupidity, and to encounter them with all the remedies she can.

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X.

It is apparent, that the general cause of our insensibility, is the weakness and blindness of our understanding, which conceives things most dreadful only by dark and confused Idea's, such as have nothing of lively, nothing of sensible in them; and so excite there proportionable motions, that is, feeble and languishing ones. The understanding separates things joyn'd together, and totally employs it self in considering some small part of the Object, without reflecting on what else belongs to it. Death is fancied only under the Idea of that ghastly look a dying Man has, without discerning any thing else that accompanies it. We look on sin under the Idea of what therein pleases and flatters our senses; without perceiving what it is that renders it so foul in the Eyes of God. This sort of stupidity is to be found almost in all sins. For of necessity to please our selves in them, we must only look on them slightly, and consider their thin outward appearance, and take our minds off from searching into what accompanies them now, and will hereafter be their sad consequences. We never see but a small portion of what is exposed to the Eyes of our Soul, and hence we are made capable of esteem-

esteeming our selves happy in the midst of our greatest miseries.

XI.

What does people of the World see at a Ball? an assembly of agreeable persons, thinking of nothing but to recreate themselves; to share in, and contribute to the common delight, They see there Women doing all they can to make themselves admir'd, and become lovely.; and Men striving as much to let them know they do admire and love them. They see there a Spectacle that flatters their Senses, fills their Fancies, softens their Hearts, and makes a gentle and pleasing entrance for the love of the World, and of Creatures into them. But what is it that the Light of Faith discovers in these prophane assemblies to those whom it enlightens, and makes discern the whole Spectacle, which is really expos'd to their Eyes, and what the Angels themselves see there. Faith discovers to them a horrible Massacre of Souls killing one another. It discovers Women, wherein the Devil dwells, which give a thousand Mortal Wounds to Miserable Men; and Men giving as deep Wounds to these Women, by their wicked Idolatries. It shews them the Devil's entring into these Souls by all the Senses.

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Senses of their Body, poisoning them by all the Objects they present them, binding them with a thousand Chains, preparing for them a thousand Torments, trampling them under their feet, and laughing at their delusion and blindness. It discovers to them God Almighty looking on these Souls with wrath, and abandoning them to the fury and rage of those wicked Spirits.

XII.

This passes for a Figure, a Déclamation, a piece of Rhetorick, wherein things are exaggerated beyond Truth: Yet is there nothing more real than it. Nay, the reality infinitely outgoes all these Figures: Those Wounds, those Mortal Blows are but faint shadows of what there is in effect. Some there are who believe nothing of all this, and this is another kind of blindness; but there are those who believe, but reflect not on it; and that's the stupidity whereof I speak. Their Thoughts look not beyond what their Eyes shew them; so that all the knowledge they have by Faith, serves for nothing, and never comes within their view. They reside in I know not what folds of their understanding, but they change not that brutish way of conceiving things only by the senses.

XIII.

XIII

Men, when they are to pass from speculation to practice, never draw consequences, and it is an astonishing thing to consider how they can be satisfied with speculative Truths, without improving and making them useful in such practices as have so near an alliance with them, that it seems impossible for them to be separated. *If I be your God, where is the Honour that is due to me,* says God himself in the Scriptures. There is a necessary consequence betwixt knowing God, and honouring him; but, let these two be never so fast link'd together, the blindness of Man is such, that it can unloose and disjoin them. Man knows God, yet honours him not: He makes a stop at the knowledge of God, and proceeds not to the necessary sequel of honouring him: He is convinc'd there is a God, but draws no consequence thence for regulating his life.

XIV.

Who would believe that Man, having attain'd to the knowledge of the Immortality of his Soul, should not improve it farther, and thence conclude, that all this life ought to be employ'd in procuring a Happy Eternity after Death? No consequence

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quence can be more evident than this : Nevertheless how many of those great Wits of the World, who have bent their studies to establish this point, seem not so much as to have thought on its consequence?

XV.

The like absurdity we commit in the most dreadful Truths of our Religion. We are satisfied to know them, and stop at the bare speculation. God does all things, 'tis he who by his Grace gives both power to will and do. We believe this Truth, and take delight to discourse of it. What flows hence? Marry that we ought continually to beg of God this Grace of which we have continual need. Yet does not this knowledge we have of our need of Grace, make us more assiduous at our Prayers ; and often we cease not in our actions, and conduct of our lives, to be as much Pelagians, as if these Truths were utterly unknown to us.

XVI.

The Devil, as the Apostle St. Peter says, is continually roving about us like a roaring Lyon, searching whom he may devour. What fear, what trembling ought not this Truth to stir up in us? and ought not these passions be incomparably greater, than if we were told we were beset with Thieves

Thieves and Murderers, ready to assassinate us? Yet how many are there who every day recite this passage of St. Peter, and are not at all touch'd with any sentiment of fear.

XVII.

If I believ'd, say certain *Calvenists*, that the Body of JESUS CHRIST were present in the Host, I would behave myself with more respect before the Blessed Sacrament, than Catholicks do. They imagine they would do what they should, and fancy this knowledge would make as deep an impression on our minds, as in reason it ought: And, 'tis true, when we are told the King is present, every one composes himself to shew what respect he can. But, whilst they talk at this rate, they let the world know they little understand the bottom of their own Hearts. Would they take the pains to consult themselves, they would find, that in a thousand exigences their knowledge remains barren, without producing that fruit it naturally should. Do not themselves believe, that God is present every where? Yet are their actions more regular than those of others? Does the knowledge of this presence keep them more to their duty, than if he were only in Heaven?

XVIII.

We ought not, nevertheless, to wonder, that our understandings are naturally inclin'd to believe, that if we had such and such knowledges, we should comply with such obligations those knowledges bind us to. The truth is, Nature and Reason sway that way, and we are only hindred by the corruption of our will. And hence it is, that this prodigious insensibility, is an evident sign that they are fallen from the state they were first created in, and that their very Nature is corrupted. So monstrous a stupidity cannot be natural. Things of the least moment afflict them even to despair: But, when all their Being, and their Eternal Happiness or Misery are at stake, they are no more concern'd, than if some trifle was to be lost.

XIX.

Nor is this stupidity in all men only a sign of Natures being in general corrupted; 'tis also in Christians a particular proof of that horrible darkness, with which our sins after Baptism benight our Souls: And nothing more clearly shews us, that sin not only causes Death, as the Apostle says, but also that Death always accompanies it, and that our Souls by it are depriv'd both of Life and Sense. For were
not

not the Soul of a Christian living in sin in a state of Death, how could it, even for one moment, be at ease? It knows it self to be under the power of the Devil, that Death may seize on it at every moment, that Hell is open to swallow it, and that perhaps no favour, no Grace is in store for it, Yet all this while doth the Soul remain, without fear, and peaceably enjoys those pleasures which it knows to be the cause of its misery. These knowledges, which faith imparts in spite of its Teeth, remain idle, without action, without producing any effect. They disturb it not; and Man acts and talks like one who had nothing to do but to recreate himself in this life, and nothing to fear in the other.

XX.

This stupidity certainly is prodigious: But the cause is evident. We need not wonder that it is night, when there is no more light, or that in death we should be without sense. We have more reason to wonder, that this stupidity should be often found in those Souls where sin seems not to reign, who to outward appearance acquit themselves of the essential duties of Christianity, practice divers exercises of Piety, and lead a life exempt from Crimes.

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For, if such as these have this new Heart, the Heart of Flesh proper to those of the New Law, how comes it to pass there is so little motion in them. If they are animated with the Holy Ghost, why see we so few signs thereof? If they are enlightened by God, how chances it they see not their dangers; or if they do, that they tremble not at them?

XXI.

This disposition may spring from several causes. In some, 'tis a proof of God; in others a punishment of their negligence; and there may be some whose natural temper may much contribute to it. But not to trouble our selves to discern these causes farther than God shall discover them to us; it seems that all those who are in this estate, have a common obligation to endeavour to free themselves from it; though it may be more dangerous to some than to others, because we ought to regulate our selves by the light of Faith, which teaches us, that this insensibility is in it self a very great evil, and make us dread that terrible threat of God to such as are not touch'd enough with his Fear, whilst he declares to them, *That it shall be ill for them at the end of their lives; Cor durum male habebit in novissimo*: And this should make

make them carefully to lay hold on all means that they shall judge proper to free themselves from this evil disposition, and to soften the hardness of their Hearts.

XXII.

It is to no purpose to vex and trouble ones self for being thus disposed; for this vexation is no remedy for that disease; yet is it not unprofitable to stand in fear of it. Nay, one of the principal duties of those that are thus affected, is to excite in themselves a Holy Fear, by placing before their Eyes those instructions of the Wise Man. *It is impossible to be Justified without Fear. Sine Timore impossibile est Justificari. That Fear is the beginning and root of Wisdom. Radix Sapientiae est Timere Deum. That it is the source of True Joy. Timor delectat Cer.* And that only Souls possess'd with Fear have reason to expect favour at Gods Hands in the day of their Death. *Timent Dominum bene in extremis.*

XXIII.

That we may obtain this disposition, which by the light of Faith we see to be so necessary to all the World, we ought to shun a fault, or rather deceit of self-love, that insensibly imposes on many; and which consists in so spiritualizing their Devotion, that they scarce ever apply them-

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selves to such Objects as may cause fear in them: Such are the meditations of Death, of Eternity, Hell, Gods Judgments, and the reasons they have to mistrust their own condition. Self-love has no mind to entertain such sad and dismal thoughts, and so never is wanting to furnish Spiritual matters more gay and pleasant. Yet have not the Saints, who without doubt were more Spiritual than we, given us any such Example: These common thoughts which we look on as gross and dull, they shun'd not; nay, on the contrary they judg'd it very profitable to have them continually in their minds; there being nothing that God oftner makes use of to draw Souls out of a certain evaporation which this insensibility produces, and to make them return to their selves, than the prospect of these dreadful Objects.

XXIV.

The greatest part therefore of Mankind ought not to apply their selves to the meditation of Gods Mercy, so as at the same time to lay aside that of his Justice, and severe Judgments: And that we may frame to our selves some Idea of these, let us consider them in that infinite number of Men, whom God before the Incarnation of his Son abandon'd to the desires of their own
Hearts;

Hearts ; in those intire Nations, who having never so much as heard of the Gospel, continue buried in darkness and in the shades of Death. Let us consider them in that other World now lately discovered, which for more than five thousand years was absolutely ignorant of God; in that great multitude of *Mahumetans*, who possess so great a part of the Earth, and who are immers'd in a thousand brutish superstitions ; in those crowds of *Hereticks*, who joyn'd together, surpass in Number all the *Catholicks* ; in those Countries which were once filled with Bishops and Christians, as *Africa*, where now there are almost none ; and lastly, in that prodigious number of bad Christians, with which the Church is so replenished, that scarce any true ones can be found.

XXV.

All these people thus blinded, and given over to the guidance of their Passions, are as many proofs of the rigour of Gods Justice. For, it is this Justice that delivers them up to the power of the Devil, who domineers over them, plays with them, cheats them, hurries them into a thousand disorders, punishes them in this World with a thousand miseries, and in the end casts them headlong into the Abyss of Hell,

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there to suffer everlasting torments. 'Tis this Justice that permits these wicked Spirits, not only to possess whole Nations of Infidels, but also to procure that strange Spoil even in the Church it self; where they often usurp the authority, whilst they advance and prefer to be Rulers there, Men without Charity, in whom they dwell and exercise their power. Hence it is the Prophet says, *I will gather together all the Generations of the Kingdoms of the North, and they shall place their Thrones at the entrance of the Gates of Hierusalem and all about its Walls.* For many of those who are as it were set to guard the Gates of the Church, and receive in the Faithful, and a great number of those to whom the Custody of its discipline is committed, and who like Sentinels are order'd to watch upon its Walls, are like the Inhabitants of the *North*, that is, they are Men without Charity, and who have not within them the warmth of the Spirit of God.

XXVI.

At this rate the whole World is a place of Torments, where by the Eyes of our Faith we descry nothing but the dreadful effects of Gods Justice. Have we a mind to fancy to ourselves a Landskip, wherein something proportionable to this may
be

be exhibited? Let us imagine a vast Plane filled with all the Instruments the cruelty of Man has invented, and on the one side a number of enraged Executioners, on the other, infinite multitudes of Criminals delivered up to their rage and fury. Let us farther look on these Executioners, as falling furiously on those miserable wretches, tormenting all, and by exquisite tortures killing many; whilst there are but few, whose lives they have orders to spare, and these few having no assurance thereof on the contrary, have reason to stand also in fear of that Death, which they see others round about them every moment suffer, since they perceive nothing in themselves whereby they should be distinguish'd from the Crowd.

XXVII.

What must be the consternation of these Wretches, being continually Spectators of one anothers torments, participating of them themselves, and in continual apprehension lest those they suffer end not in them, (as they see them in others) by a cruel and shameful Death? Could those foolish joys, those vain troubles of the World, find place in any breast there, could pride tempt them in this wretched state? And yet doth Faith expose to our Eyes a

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Spectacle far more horrible : It lets us see Devils dispers'd over the World, tormenting and afflicting all Mankind in a thousand different ways, hurrying almost all first into sin, and then into Hell and Eternal Death.

XXVIII.

It was the prospect of this sad Spectacle, that made the Prophet *Isaiab* cry out. *Propterea dilatavit infernus animam suam; & aperuit os suum absq; ullo termino; & descendunt fortes ejus, & populus ejus & sublimis gloriosique.* That is to say; that the Mouth of Hell is always open, that the great, the little, the strong, the weak, the rich, the poor promiscuously descend thither. This sight made the Prophet *Jeremy* say. *O Mucro Domini usq; quo non quiesces? ingredere vaginam tuam.* O Sword of Gods Justice, wilt thou never rest? Wilt thou continually be filling the World with slaughter? Wilt not thou so much as spare the Church it self, but deliver up to its Enemies the greatest part of those who seem to be its Sons? This also was that Spectacle which the Angel shew'd to *St. John* in the Vision of a horrible Press, where the Bloud of those who were there crush'd, ran down on all sides, and overflow'd the receiving Vessels. For here is
not

not meant the Bloud of Material Bodies, but that of Carnal Souls, which the Devils deprive of the life of Grace by the Crimes they engage them in.

XXIX.

We spend our Lives in the midst of this spiritual slaughter, and we may say that we swim up and down in the Bloud of sinners; that we are all covered with it; that the World wherein we are carried is a River of Bloud, since the Life of the World is all composed of criminal actions, causing the Death of those who commit them, and drawing in the rest by the contagion of ill Examples. To perish there needs nothing but to let our selves be carried away by the torrent. We are in nothing distinguishable from those who dye in our sight: We are not stronger than they to resist the rage of the Devil. Our whole aid is in the protection of him who has freed us thus far, and proffers the same for the future. In the mean time we dream not at all of this; we have no sense of our past deliverance, no fear of our present danger, no anxiety for that to come; because we neither see the greatness of our miseries, nor the greatness of our dangers, nor the greatness of those evils which threaten us.

The Holy Fathers bear witness, that nothing profited the Church more than visible persecutions; because that kept all Christians in a Holy Fear. They daily saw some of their Brethren snatch'd from them; and every one imagining it might perhaps be his turn the next day to confess JESUS CHRIST before the Judges, and in the midst of Torments, thought of nothing but to prepare himself for it by all the exercises of a Christian Life. *When, says Tertullian, is Faith more lively, than when one fears most? and when fears more, than in time of persecution? For then it is that the whole Church is in a Holy fright; that Faith is most vigilant in this Spiritual warfare; that it is most exact in the observation of Fasts, Stations, Prayers and Exercises of Humility.* This was the effect of what they saw with their corporal Eyes; whilst that which Faith discovers to us is infinitely more terrible.. By it we do not see Men, but Devils tearing from the bosom of the Church its Children: These massacre not only their Bodies, but their Souls too. They do not make them undergo short torments to gain Immortal Crowns, but they damn them for all Eternity. The Death of
Martyrs.

Martyrs was for many the Seed of Life, according to the saying of one of the Ancients; whereas the Spiritual Death of Christians is but for most others the Seed of Death, corrupting them by the Example of those Crimes which have caused it. Lastly, as persecutions were neither uninterrupted, nor universal, the greatest number of Christians found means to shelter themselves from them; whereas there are few who suffer not by this spiritual persecution, and by this overflowing of vice which drowns all the Church. Whence comes it then that the first Christians were sensibly touch'd with visible persecutions, and we are so little with those we cannot see? It is because the former are seen by the Eyes of the Body, and the latter only by those of Faith: Or rather because their Faith was lively and clear-sighted, and that ours is languishing, obscure, and without light.

XXXI.

To see how we behave our selves, one would think we had got Letters of Insurance for our Salvation, that God himself had revealed to us, that the Devils should never do us any hurt; that we were in a full certainty of our being possess'd of his Grace, without fear of ever losing it; and

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and that our Names were infallibly written in the Book of Life. We look on the dangers and misfortunes of others, as if there were nothing for us to fear, and as from the Shoar we see storms tossing and swallowing up Ships that are at Sea. If in our minds we detest that false assurance the *Calvinists* flatter the World with; yet in reality we approve it in some sort by our actions, and by the sentiments of our Hearts. We rely on the Mercy of God, not by any confidence we derive from Charity, but by a stupidity springing from self-love. Wherefore it is to us the Scripture speaks, when it warns *not to say, that the Mercy of God is great. Ne dicas, Misericordia Dei magna est.* For his Mercy would not cease to be great, when it should permit us to perish, and place us amongst the throng of so many Nations, whom he hath left in darkness, and of so many Christians, who live under the tyranny of Devils. We fancy that we bear some worth and value with God Almighty. But if all the Men on the Earth are in his Eyes, but as a drop of Water, and a grain of Dust, as the Scripture speaks; What portion shall we take up of this drop, and of this grain? If then it be just we should hope in his Mercy, having so often experienc'd

rienc'd the effects of it ; it is not less Equitable we should fear his Justice, in it self so dreadful, and of which we see so terrible consequences in all times, and in all places of the World.

XXXII.

We ought never to destroy in our Souls the hope we have in his Mercy, nor the confidence we place in his Eternal Love. But, the fear of his Justice destroys it not; on the contrary, it establishes and fortifies it : Since this very fear is one of the greatest effects of his Mercy ; and we shall have so much the more reason to hope he beholds us with a favourable Eye, by how much our fear of his Justice shall be greater. Let us fear God, because he is to be fear'd, and because we fear, let us hope in him. Those whom he forsakes neither fear him, nor desire to fear him. And it is for this reason, that it is profitable to destroy in our Souls all those false pretexts which self-love lays hold on to confirm us in this evil assurance ; and to shun all those thoughts and motions of fear, which are always troublesome to us, because they always a little disturb that peace and quiet we are glad to enjoy.

XXXIII.

For the most part this confidence is
grounded

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grounded either on a too great assurance that our sins after Baptism are forgiven, expressly contrary to Scripture, which admonishes us not to be without fear for those sins for which we think we have obtained pardon; *De propitiato peccato noli esse sine metu*: Or on our having for a long time practis'd the common duties of Christian Piety. But to allay this excessive confidence by warrantable motives of fear furnish'd us by Truth it self, we need only remember, that no body knows with certainty whether Charity or concupiscence reigns and rules in his Heart; and this uncertainty is much greater in those who are cold and negligent. For without doubt, as Hereticks practice a number of exterior good works without Charity, so the like may also be practis'd in the Church, without any better principle. For it is not a more difficult task to observe without Grace the exterior precepts of the Law of JESUS CHRIST, than to observe those of *Mahomet*, which sometimes are not a jot less difficult.

XXXIV.

So, this exterior innocence, consisting only in observing the exterior duties of Christian Religion, is a very deceitful equivocal sign of interior Grace and Innocence:

cence: Since all this may proceed from custom, a habit gotten, the love of Creatures, and a fear purely humane. And though we ought not slightly to pass this sentence on our selves, nevertheless we may reasonably fear lest God does; placing us amongst those of whom he says, *This people honour me with their Lips, but their Heart is far from me.*

XXXV.

We ought not also to exempt our selves from this upon the score of that common Doctrine, that Grace is only lost by mortal sin, and that we do not remember to have committed any. For who will be our surety for this? All the testimony we can bear of our selves, at the most has only relation to corporal sins; but how many of these are there, whose degree we know not? Who is he that can say, that he hath not lost Grace by Pride or Envy, by spiritual sloth, self-love, or a sinful adhesion to things of this World? St. Bernard tells us, that the sole sin of Ingratitude for favours receiv'd of God Almighty, may be so great as to equallize sometimes the enormity of several corporal sins; and it is in this sense according to St. Chrysostome, that sins once forgiven, are again imputed, because that ingratitude where-

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whereinto we fall by forgetting so great favours, comprehends them all in some sort, and makes us as guilty of them, as if we had never been pardon'd. Now who is he who can ascertain himself that he has not committed this sin of Ingratitude?

XXXVI.

There is nothing more astonishing than the threats our Saviour made to those of *Capernaum*, viz. That they should be more severely handled at the day of Judgment, than those of *Sodom* and *Gemorrhah*; that is, than two Towns defiled with the most abominable of Crimes. For, the only ground for these threats was their not having made use of the favours he had done them in working in their sight so many Miracles, and giving them so many instructions. It is not recorded, that otherwise they were more disorderly, nor greater Enemies of our Saviour, than the other *Jews*. Now I would fain know, who has not reason to fear lest our Saviour lay the same reproach to his charge? In the mean time, where is the use we have made thereof? Where are those stores of Vertues we have got by the help of the Talents God has put into our Hands? 'Tis true, we have believ'd, but
where

where are the works of our Faith? Where is the use he will exact of us for the benefits he has conferred on us? We must be stupendiously insensible not to be touch'd and affrighted to think that some will be found, in whom no extraordinary disorder was ever known; who, for all that, shall be judged by Truth it self more guilty than those of *Sodom*, and that for the sole abusing of Gods Favour.

XXXVII.

All the occasions God has offer'd us, whereby we might advance in the way of Vertue, are as so many Graces whereof he will demand accompt, They are so many fruitful Harvests which he commanded us to reap, and out of which he order'd us to lay up stores, wherewith to maintain our selves at such times as he should permit us to be try'd. For Example, sicknesses and sufferings, are the Harvest time of Patience; rebukes and contempts are that of Humility: our losses that of Poverty: Who makes good use of these Harvests, is wise, according to the Scripture: *Qui congregat in messe filius sapiens est*; because he makes provision of Grace, which will be necessary to him another time. But, Scripture tells us, That he who makes ill use thereof shall be *found* founded;

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founded, *Qui autem stertit estote filius confusionis.* Where are we to be rank'd? What use can we say we have made of so many Harvests God has given us?

XXXVIII.

The Church divides the whole year into several seasons of Graces; and the Devotion of the Faithful ought to follow its Spirit: as Natural Beings never fail to follow that general Spirit, which regulates the course of the whole Machine of the World. The Birds, as the Scripture says, keep with exactness their seasons: Now they build their Nests, then change their Feathers; and this by a regular and constant order. In like manner Devotion has its seasons. There is one proper for procuring the Spirit of Penitence; and it is that wherein the Church practises that Vertue. There is another when it invites us to be joyful, to a new life, and to imitate that we shall enjoy in Heaven; and this is the Feast of *Easter*. To every Mystery peculiar Graces are allotted, and the Feast wherein the Church celebrates the one, is the proper season to obtain the other. But those who husband ill these seasons, who permit these solemnities to slip away Without enriching themselves with such Graces as God then bestows on well

well disposed Souls, will without doubt hear the same reproach which the Prophet made the *Jews* of not having known the Judgment of our Lord, and of being inferior in prudence to the Birds of the Air, who never fail to do in season what Nature bids. *Milvus in Cælo cognovit tempus suum: Turtur & Hirundo, & Ciconia custodierunt tempus adventus sui: Populus autem meus non cognovit Judicium Dei.*

XXXIX.

If the abuse of these lesser Graces be a matter so much to be fear'd, as we have declar'd; what is to be said of our abusing that Grace of Graces, I mean the Holy Eucharist, which contains the Author of all Graces. The Apostle tells us, that God did visibly punish the first Christians, who communicated without due preparation, and who made no difference betwixt the Body of our Lord and common Meats; and that this was the cause of Death, and of several Diseases amongst the Faithful; But, that this punishment from God was profitable, since it serv'd to expiate their faults in this life, and prevent their damnation. *Cum judicamur autem a Domino corripimur ut non cum hoc mundo damnemur.* It seems that God now adays carries himself otherwise towards

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wards those that prophane his Holy Mysteries; He does not shew his Justice so apparently to the Eyes of Men; He retires himself on high, as the Scripture says, and keeps at a distance from us. *Et propter eam in altum regredere.* Never was more unworthy communions, and yet there's no visible punishment. This ought to strike a fear, into such as know, by the negligence of their lives, that they have little profited by often communicating; lest this indulgence of God towards them, be not an effect of his having abandon'd them, and that they are so much the more guilty, as they have been less punished.

XL.

One of the wiles by which self-love hinders us from applying to our selves the reproaches our Saviour makes to certain people in the Gospel, is to represent them to our selves so black and ugly, that we cannot fancy we should ever resemble them. For Example, we look on the Pharisees as a sort of people so intolerably proud beyond all measure, that we think there can be no other such now amongst Men. But this is not so. They were like other Men, and their vanity was not easily to be known by their outward behaviour; nay they knew it not themselves.

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On the other side, they were great observers of the Law, and mighty exact in the least matter that had relation to Gods service. Who then will be our warrant that we are not like to them? They were Hypocrites, 'tis true; but their Hypocrisie was unknown to them. Perhaps we are as guilty as they of that fault; and 'tis certain, we all have it in some degree. In the mean time JESUS CHRIST declares, that they should be more rigorously punish'd than the rest of the *Jews*, who were nevertheless very wicked. *Accipient prolixius judicium*. From this we learn, that one may be wicked in the sight of God, whilst he leads a regular life in the sight of Men.

XLI.

It is remarkable, that most of the reproaches and threats our Saviour makes in the Gospel, are only for spiritual vices; for, he supposed that corporal ones are sufficiently condemn'd of themselves. In the *Capernaties* he condemns the abuse of his Word and Miracles; In the Pharisees Pride and Interest; in his Apostles, desire of precedency; in those who he says shall be plac'd on his left hand, and sent to Hell, the omission of Works of Mercy; and in the Parable of the Virgins, a want of interior

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interior Charity. In like manner the greatest part of his Precepts concern inward Vertues, as the love of our Enemies; reservedness in judging; being loosened from the Goods of this World, renouncing humane satisfactions, vigilance in prayer, the humility and simplicity of Children: 'Tis here he places that Justice surpassing the Justice of the Pharisees, and without which none can enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; mean while who can assure himself that he fully complies with it.

XLII.

The Holy Scripture furnishes us with several marks whereby to know either the Death or Life of the Soul: But these very marks are more apt to augment than diminish the fear of those who have little devotion, and are in this state of insensibility of which we speak. It, first of all, tells us, that who has not the Spirit of JESUS CHRIST belongs not to him: *Qui non habet Spiritum Christi, hic non est ejus.* Thus though all those who have bid farewell to sin, ought in some sort to be confident that his Spirit dwells in them, because they feel a desire at the bottom of their Hearts, to dedicate themselves solely to JESUS CHRIST, yet does not this confidence exclude that fear which they

they also ought to have, lest this sign of his presence prove not a fallacious one, and they mistake a resolution meerly natural, and wrought by custom, for a Divine figure form'd by the Spirit of God. For how many other effects are there of this Holy Spirit, which are not to be found in them? The Spirit of JESUS CHRIST is a Spirit of recollection, and continual adoration; 'tis a Spirit of zeal for Justice, of hatred for sin, of love for sinners: 'Tis a Spirit of the Cross, of Death, and continual Sacrifice: 'Tis a Spirit of leaving and forsaking all Creatures: 'Tis a Spirit of sweetness and goodness towards all Men. These are the motions the Spirit of God fully excited in the Heart of our Saviour, and which it ought in some measure to excite in ours; if we have receiv'd from his fulness any participation of that Spirit which ought to make us like to the Image of the only Son of God. Behold here the Marks and Tokens of Life! The more lively, the more active these sentiments are, the more we have reason to believe that we live: And the more we find them weak and languishing, the more we ought to apprehend our being in a state of Death.

Again the Scripture shews us what the Life of the Soul is, in telling us that the *Just Man lives by Faith*. Now to understand fully this place, we must observe, that the Soul lives but by its Knowledge, and by its Love: From whence it follows, that this Life of Faith consists in thinking, loving, and hating according to Faith: that is, to live by Faith, we ought to judge things little or great, profitable or hurtful, good or evil, not according to our own gust and deprav'd inclinations, but according to the Light of Faith. In like manner, the sentiments of our Heart ought to be directed by the same Light, by it our fear, our hope, our joy, our sadness, our love and hate ought to be guided.

To know then that we live by Faith, we need but consider whether we desire what Faith shews us, whether we are troubled at what Faith discovers be contrary to the Law of God: Whether we beg for our selves and others such things as Faith tells us ought to be the subject of our Requests: If we do, we may be assured our Soul truly lives. But if, on the contrary, we find our selves afflicted with what ought to cause joy in us,
and

and joyful at what ought to afflict us, as we then have but a small share in this life of Faith, so have we but a few marks of the life of our Soul.

XLIV.

In fine, the Apostle St. John assures us, *That he who loves not, remains in Death,* and that he who loves, has life. And the Apostle St. Paul lest we should be deceived by a vain Image of false Charity, hath taken care to describe exactly the qualities of that which is true, and which gives life to our Souls. *Charity, says he, is patient, is benigne; Charity dealeth not perversly; is not puff'd up, is not ambitious; seeketh not her own; is not provok'd to anger; thinks not evil; rejoiceth not upon Iniquity, but rejoiceth at Truth.* This is the Rule by which we ought to examine our selves. If we can bear our selves sincere witnesses, that we feel in us all the effects of Charity; in the name of God let us be full of confidence and joy; but if we feel in our selves the clean contrary, nothing but the greatest stupidity imaginable can stifle those just sentiments of fear which such knowledge ought to cause in us.

XLV.

We ought not also to take for a sign that we have life in the sight of God, a certain

Equality of mind, by which we judge right enough of most things. For this quality is consistent with the greatest disorders; and we often see those, whose condition is very bad through crimes either spiritual or corporal, for which they have done no penance, who nevertheless conserve a certain region of their mind, seeming not at all troubled by bad impressions from the Devil, in which they judge well of most things, and handsomely and discreetly regulate the affairs of their Lives. And the Devil, who possesses them often, permits them to dwell almost always in this calm Region, and thence only to be acquainted with themselves; that they may not perceive the depravation of their Hearts, by which he keeps them enslaved.

XLVI.

We ought therefore to fear, we ought to tremble before God, having before our Eyes so many motives of fear. But this fear ought to be a wholesome one, a fear which instead of discouraging the Soul, ought to cheer it up, and incite it seriously to apply remedies to whatsoever causes fear in it. It ought to be a fear inciting us to penance, to prayers, to vigilancy and labour. Yet notwithstanding all this, if we find our selves in a

con-

condition where it seems we perceive in our selves nothing but coldness and insensibility, and that we cannot alter this disposition of our minds; we ought with all humility to submit to Gods decrees, and hope to draw as much profit thence, as if it had pleas'd his Divine Majesty, to have fill'd us with sensible devotion, consolation, and fervour. And perhaps we shall effectively draw this advantage thence, if we sincerely entertain these sentiments which that condition leads us to, and that we judge of our selves as in truth we ought to do.

XLVII.

Nor would the advantage be inconsiderable, should we hereby be conserv'd in a low opinion of our selves. But we must be careful, lest under this pretext we be inclin'd to continue voluntarily in this condition; God, who wills that some Souls should be in it, to humble them, commands at the same time that they do their endeavours to come out of it. 'Tis to all he addresses these words of his Prophet, *Erudi te Jerusalem ne forte recedat a te anima mea.* Instruct thy self, O Christian Soul, for fear my Spirit leave thee. Do not wilfully continue in ignorance and darkness. We ought equally to avoid neg-

ligence in searching the Lights of God, and
 impatience in the darkness wherein he
 leaves us. The one is the effect of sloth,
 the other of Pride. But these lights we
 ought to seek, are not lights purely specu-
 lative, they are such as touch our Hearts
 at the same time; that they instruct our
 understandings, lights that spring from
 Charity, which is the true remedy for
 hardness of Heart, and for insensibility.

The End of the Third Treatise.

XIV.

Not would the advantage be incredible
 which should we have by the conviction
 of our hearts. But we must
 be careful, lest under this pretext we be in-
 clined to continue voluntarily in this con-
 dition; God, who will that some souls
 should be in it, to humble them, com-
 mends it to them, that they do not

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not without contentment in their hearts
 for fear they should have more
 of it. I beseech thy God, O Christian
 to instruct thee in the way of his promise
 that thou mayest be able to resist the
 temptations of the world and the devil
 and the flesh, and to keep thy heart
 pure and undefiled, and to love the
 Lord thy God with all thy heart, and
 with all thy mind, and with all thy
 strength, and to love thy neighbour
 as thyself.



The Fourth Treatise.

Of the means to conserve Peace amongst Men.

First P A R T.

*Querite pacem civitatis ad quam
transmigrare vos feci, & orate pro
ea ad Dominum; quia in Pace
illius erit Pax vobis.*

I. Very Society whereof we are a
part, every thing with which
we have any tye or commerce,
on which we have any influence,
or which may work on us, and whose dif-
ferent state is able to alter the disposition
of

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of our Souls, are the Towns wherein we pass away the time of our Pilgrimage, since in those our Souls find employment and repose.

Thus the whole World is our City, because we as Inhabitants of it, have a certain tie with all Men, from whom we sometimes receive profit, and sometimes loss. The *Hollanders* drive a Trade with those of *Japan*, we with the *Hollanders*; and so we also have a commerce with those people who inhabit the furthest parts of the World; because the advantages the *Hollanders* draw thence, afford them means either to help or incommode us. The like may be said of all other Nations; they all are fastned to us some way or other, they are all Links of that Chain which ties all Mankind together, by that reciprocal need we all have of one another.

II.

We are in a more particular manner said to be Citizens of the Kingdom wherein we live, and were born, of the Town where we dwell, and of the Society we make a part of; and in some sense we may say we are Citizens of our selves, and of our own Hearts. For our many passions and thoughts in some sort are a kind of people with whom we are to live, and it is often easier

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easier to live with all the exterior World, than with this interior one which we carry within our selves.

The Scripture which obliges us to seek the Peace of the City where God makes us inhabit, is equally to be understood of all these different Towns: That is, it obliges us to seek and desire the Peace and Tranquillity of the whole World, of our Kingdom, of our City, of our Society, and of our selves. But as it is more in our power to procure Peace for some of these Towns, than for others, so must we in different ways endeavour the same.

III.

There are but few who are in a condition to procure the Peace of the World, of Kingdoms or Cities, otherwise than by their Prayers. So that our duty in this point is reduc'd to begging it sincerely at Gods Hands, and in believing our selves oblig'd to do so; as really we are, since those exterior troubles which divide Kingdoms, often rise from the little care particular persons whereof they are compos'd, have to beg Peace of God, and their small acknowledgment for so great a favour when granted them. Temporal Wars have so strange consequences, and work so sad effects even on Souls themselves, that

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we cannot be too apprehensive of them. Wherefore St. *Paul*, where he recommends praying for the Kings of the Earth, expressly observes, as one principle of this obligation, the need we have for our selves of this outward Tranquility, *Ut quietam & tranquillam vitam agamus.*

IV.

We procure Peace to our selves, when we regulate and order our thoughts and passions; and by such an interior Peace, we contribute much to that of the Society wherein we live; since it is disturb'd almost by nothing but our unruly passions. But as this Peace with those who are united to us by closer tyes, and a frequenter commerce, is of extraordinary great importance for preserving Tranquility in our selves; and nothing is a greater Enemy to it, than that division opposite to this Peace, it is of it we must particularly understand this Document of the Prophet, *Querite pacem civitatis ad quam migrare vos feci.*

V.

Man for the most part neither guides his life by Faith, nor by Reason: He rashly follows the impressions of things present, or the commonly receiv'd opinions of those with whom he lives. There are few who with any care apply themselves to consider

consider what is really and truly necessary for passing this life happily either according to God or the World. Did they reflect seriously on't, they would find, that Faith and Reason go hand in hand, and agree concerning the greatest part of the duties and actions of Mankind: That those things we are forbidden by Religion, are often as opposite to our Repose in this life, as to our Salvation in the other; and that most of those we are commanded to do, contribute more to our Temporal Happiness, than whatsoever we are prompted to seek after with so much earnestness by our Ambition and Vanity.

VI.

Now this agreement betwixt Reason and Faith, appears no where so evident, as in the obligation to conserve Peace with those who are link'd in Society with us, and to eschewing all occasions that may disturb the same. For if Religion do prescribe us this duty, as one of the essentiallest to Christian Piety, Reason also inclines us to it as one of greatest importance for our own Temporal Interest.

VII.

We cannot with any attention consider the origine of the greatest part of those troubles and crosses, which either happen

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to our selves, or that we see befall others, but we must acknowledge that they spring for the most part from our not noting well one another: And if we will be just to our selves, we shall find, that very rarely any one speaks ill of us without cause, or takes delight to hurt or vex us, only for wantonness. We always contribute something; if we give no immediate cause, at least we have done a far off. We commit without thinking a thousand little faults against those with whom we live, which dispose them to take an ill part, what otherwise they would without trouble pass by, had they not already in their minds given entertainment to some disgust. In fine, it is almost always true, that, if we are not beloved, 'tis we who have not known how to make our selves be so.

VIII.

We therefore our selves contribute to those inquietudes, those crosses, to those troubles which others give us; and as 'tis partly this which renders us unhappy, nothing imports us more, even according to the World, than seriously to endeavour to shun these. And the Science which teaches us to do it, is infinitely more useful than all those others which Men learn with so much care, and so great expence of time.

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time. And for this reason we have cause to deplore the ill choice Men make of the Arts, Exercises, and Sciences, they apply themselves to. They diligently apply themselves to know the matter, and to find the means how to make it serve their occasions; they learn the ways of taming Beasts, and employing them for the use of life; But they do not so much as dream of learning the Art to make Men useful to them, and hinder them from disturbing and making their lives miserable; although Men contribute infinitely more either to their Happiness or Misery, than all the rest of the Creatures.

IX.

This is what Reason teaches us of this duty: But if we consult Faith and Religion, they oblige us farther still to the same, by the Authority of their Doctrine, and the Divine Reasons they propose. **JESUS CHRIST** so loved Peace, that of the Eight Beatitudes he proposes in the Gospel, he thereof made Two. *Blessed, says he, are the Meek, for they shall possess the Earth;* this comprehends the tranquility of this, and repose of the other life. *Blessed are, says he again, the Peace-makers, for they shall be call'd the Sons of God;* which is the highest title Men are capable of, and
which

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which is therefore due only to the highest Vertue. St. Paul has made an expresse Law concerning Peace, in commanding it to be kept as much as possible with all Men whatsoever: *Cum omnibus hominibus, si fieri potest, Pacem habentes.* He forbids strifes and suits, and enjoyns patience and meekness towards all: *Servum Dei non oportet litigare, sed mansuetum esse ad omnes.* And lastly, he declares, that the Spirit of Contention is not the Spirit of the Church. *Si quis videtur contentiosus esse, nos talem consuetudinem non habemus.*

X.

There are scarce any admonitions that occur more frequent in the Books of Wisdom, than those which tend to regulating us in the commerce we have with our neighbour, and making us shun whatsoever may excite divisions and quarrels. 'Tis upon this score the *Wise-man* tells us, That meek words multiply Friends, and mitigate Enemies, *Verbum dulce multiplicat Amicos, & mitigat Inimicos.* And that persons of worth are full of sweetness and complaisance, *Et lingua Eucharis in bono homine abundat.*

In another place he says, That meek answers appease wrath, and sharp ones stir up rage. *Responsio mellis frangit iram:*
Sermo

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Sermo durus suscitatur furorem: He tells us, That the Wise-man procures himself love by his words, *Sapiens in verbis seipsum amabilem facit.*

In fine, he so far Extolls this Vertue, that he calls it the Tree of Life; because it procures us quiet in this World, and in the next. *Lingua placabilis, Lignum Vitæ.*

XI.

He has taken care also to teach us, that the advantage we receive from this Vertue, in making us be belov'd, is preferrable to these which Men desire most, *viz* Honour and Glory. For this is one sense of these words, *Fili in mansuetudine opera tua perfice & super gloriam hominum deligere.*

Here the Wise-man compares the two things Men principally seek from others, *viz.* Love and Glory. Glory springs from an Idea of Excellence, Love from an Idea of Goodness; and this is known by a meek and sweet behaviour. Now in this comparison he teaches us, that though esteem and repute from others satisfies our vanity more, yet it is better to have their Love. Esteem only lets us into their Judgment; whereas Love opens us their Hearts: Esteem often has for companions Fears and Jealousies; whereas Love destroys all malignant

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lignant Passions; and 'tis these that disturb our quiet.

XII.

We may from Scripture draw an infinite number of Reasons, exciting us to conserve Peace amongst Men by all possible means.

Nothing agrees better with the Spirit of the New Law, than the practice of this duty, and one may say, that even the Essence of this Law leads us to it. For whereas concupiscence, which is the Law of the Flesh, separating Man from God, has set him at variance with himself, by making his Passions rebel against Reason; and with all other Men, by making him their enemy, and enclining him to endeavour to get dominion and tyranny over them. On the contrary, it is proper to Charity, (which is the New Law which JESUS CHRIST came into the World to establish) to repair all these breaches sin has made, to reconcile Man to God by making him subject to his Laws, to reconcile him to himself, by bringing his Passions to the bent of Reason; and lastly, to reconcile him to all Men, by taking from him the desire of domineering over them.

Now

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Now one of the principal effects of this Charity in respect of Men, is to make us apply our selves how to conserve Peace with them; for it is impossible Charity should be lively and sincere in the Heart, without producing in it this application. We naturally fear to hurt those we love: And this love making us look on all the faults we commit against others as great, and of consequence, and in those they commit against us as slight and small; it thereby extinguishes the usualest source of quarrels, which for the most part take their rise from these false Idea's that make all things look big which concern our selves, and those small and little which concern others.

XIII.

It is impossible to love our neighbour without desiring to serve and help him, nor can we do this without being at peace with him: So that the same duty by which we are charg'd, according to Scripture, to help him in what we are able, obliges us also to keep peace with him; for Peace is the Gate by which we enter into his Heart, and this by aversion is shut and made inaccessible.

XIV.

It is true, we are not always in a condition

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dition to serve others by discourses of edification: But there are many more ways of doing that. We may do it by holding our peace, by Examples of Modesty, Patience, and other Vertues: And it is Peace and Union with them, that open their Hearts to profit thereby.

XV.

Charity does not only embrace all Men, but it does this at all times. And thus we ought to be at peace with all Men, and this always. For, no time, no occurrence happens where we ought not to love and desire to serve them; and by consequence there is none, where we ought not, on our part, to take away all obstacles which may intervene, and the greatest of these is a certain aversion and strangeness they may have for us. So that even then when we cannot keep an interior Peace with them, which consists in an union of thoughts and sentiments, we must at least endeavour to preserve an exterior one, consisting in the devoirs of humane civility; to the end we may not be rendred incapable to serve them some other time, and always testify to God our sincere desire to do so.

Moreover, if we do not actually serve them, we are at least obliged to do them no harm. Now we do them harm, when
by

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by crossing them, we give them occasion to look but coldly on us. We do them a real hurt, in disposing them, by an aversion they may conceive against us, to take our words and actions in evil part; to speak of them unjustly, and so as may wound their Consciences; and in fine, to slight even Truth it self in our mouths, and not to care for Justice, when 'tis we that maintain it.

XVI.

It is not therefore only the interest of the Man, but that of Truth it self, which obliges us not to exasperate them needlessly against us. If we love Truth, we ought to avoid all occasions of rendring it odious by our indiscretions, and of shutting against it Mens Hearts and Minds, whilst we shut them against our selves: 'Tis to make us eschew this fault, that the Scripture admonishes us, *That the Wise adorn Science.* That is to say, they make it appear venerable before Men, and the esteem which they gain themselves by their moderation, makes that Truth which they denounce, appear more august: Whereas should they incur the contempt or hatred of others, they would bring it into disesteem, because contempt and hatred ordinarily pass from the Persons, to the Doctrine which they teach. XVII.

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XVII.

It is impossible Honest Men should always be at Peace with others, since our Saviour has told them, that they ought not to expect to be otherwise treated by them, than he himself had been. And it is for this reason that St. *Paul*, exhorting us to keep Peace with others, added this restriction. *If it be possible, Si fieri potest*: Knowing well that 'tis not always so, and that some occasions intervene where we ought to run the hazard of exasperating others, by opposing our selves to the course of their Passions. But to the end we may do this with profit, and without having just reason to fear lest we should have contributed to the ill consequences which may thence arise, we must extream carefully avoid choosing them to no purpose, or for things of small moment, or too harshly; for the truth is, that those only who spare others as much as they can, are in a possibility of doing good by correcting their faults.

XVIII.

St. *Peter*, knowing that it was impossible Christians should live without trouble and persecution, admonishes them not to draw these on themselves by their own Crimes: In like manner one may say, that
it

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it being impossible Men should live without being hated, they ought with extream care to avoid incurring hatred by their imprudence and indiscretion, and thereby losing the merit they might gain by this kind of suffering.

XIX.

Fraternal correction is a duty expressly recommended to us in the Gospel, and our obligation thereunto is a very strict one. Nevertheless it is certain there are very few in a capacity of putting it in practice with profit, and so as not to do the party reprehended more harm than good. Yet for all this they ought not to think themselves freed from the obligation. For as we are not exempt from guilt before God, when by imprudence we make our selves incapable of doing Corporal Works of Mercy, and he will lay to our charge the want of those good deeds we out of our own fault do not; neither ought we to think our selves free from sin, when through the little care we have of preserving Peace amongst our neighbours, we become incapable of practicing in their regard those Spiritual Works of Mercy which are due to them from us.

XX.

In fine, our Spiritual Interest, and that
Charity

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Charity which we owe to our selves, ought to make us forbear doing whatsoever may set us at variance with our neighbour, and render us the object of his hatred and contempt, for nothing is apter to extinguish or cool in our selves that Charity which we owe them, since there is not a more difficult task than to love those in whom we find nothing but coldness, or even aversion.

XXI.

But the difficulty lies not in convincing our selves of the necessity to conserve Peace with our neighbour; 'tis ineffectively conserving it, by shunning whatsoever may breed an alteration. It is certain, that nothing but a superabundance of Charity can produce this great effect. Yet amongst humane means necessary for this end, none seems more proper than a diligent enquiry after the ordinary causes of such dissensions as happen amongst Men, to the end we may be able to prevent the same. Now considering these in general, one may say, that misunderstandings between us and others, never happen but either through our disobliging them, so as they avoid and separte from us, or their disobliging us by their words or deeds, so that we our selves estrange from them,

them, and renounce their Friendship, Either of these two may happen by an absolute breach, or by an insensible cooling of Friendship. But in what manner soever this comes to pass, 'tis always these reciprocal discontents that cause ruptures, and the only means of shunning them, is never to do what may offend another, nor be offended at what others shall do against us.

XXII. There is nothing more easie than to prescribe this in general, yet scarce any thing harder than to practice it in particular. And one may say it is one of those rules, which by being short in words, are nevertheless of vast extent in their meaning, and which under the generality of their terms comprehend an infinite number of most important duties. Upon this score it will be expedient to look into it, and examine more particularly by what means we may avoid offending others, and how we may bring our selves into such a disposition as not to be offended by any thing they shall either say or do against us.

XXIII. The means to be successful in practice of the first of these devoirs, is to know what it is that exasperates others, and gives them

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them those impressions which produce a version and distance. And all these causes seem reducable to two, viz. contradicting their opinions, and withstanding their passions. But as this may happen divers ways, that those opinions and passions are not all of the same nature, and that there are some for which they have a more sensible concern than others: We must carry on this enquiry a little farther, and consider more minutely those judgments and those passions which are most dangerous to be thwarted.

XXIV.

Men are naturally wedded to their opinions, because they are never free from a desire of Lording it over others by all ways possible. We in some sort reign over them by their believing what we say: 'tis a kind of dominion to make our sentiments pass current amongst others: And so the opposition we here find, wounds us in proportion to the love we have for this kind of Empire. *Man*, says the Scripture, *places his content in the sentiments he proposes*, *Latatur homo in sententiis oris sui*. For by proposing them, he makes them his own, he becomes concern'd for them, and their ruine carries with it the destruction of some thing that belongs to him.

We cannot

cannot oppose them, without shewing him that he has been mistaken; and he takes no pleasure in being so. Whoever in any particular point contradicts another, pretends to know more of it than he; and so at the same time gives him two very unpleasing impressions, the one that he wants knowledge, the other that he who thus finds fault, surpasses him in understanding. The first humbles him, the second exasperates him, and causes jealousies. These effects are more lively and sensible, as concupiscence is more quick and active: But there are very few, who in some measure are not touch'd therewith, and who can endure to be contradicted without feeling any motion of displeasure.

XXV.

Besides this general cause, there are many more making Man adhere to his own sense, and touch'd to be contradicted. Although devotion seem (in diminishing the esteem we may have of our selves, and the desire of domineering over the minds of others) at the same time to diminish in us the love for our own sentiments, yet does it often produce a quite contrary effect. For as devout people look on all things spiritually, and yet it often happens
that

that they are deceived; it also comes to pass, that sometimes they spiritualize certain fallshoods, and dress up some opinions, either uncertain or ill grounded, with Reasons of Conscience, which cause them to adhere obstinately thereunto. So that applying in general that love they have for Truth, for Vertue, for the concerns of God, to these opinions they have not well examin'd; their zeal is stir'd up, and grows high against such as either oppose these opinions, or do not seem to be perswaded of their Truth; and the remainder even of Concupiscence in them, mingling and blending it self with these motions of zeal, spreads it self so much the freelyer, the less these persons resist it, and distinguish this double motion in their Hearts; because they only perceive their minds to be taken up with these spiritual Reasons, which seem to them to be the sole source of all their zeal.

XXVI.

It is by an effect of this secret illusion, that we see some very devout Persons adhere so obstinately to certain opinions in Philosophy, and those notorious false ones, that they even look with pity on such as are not convinc'd thereof, and upbraid them with the love of novelty, when they advance

advance nothing but what is undoubtedly true. There are some before whom one cannot speak of substantial forms, without putting them into passion. Others espouse *Aristotle's* quarrel, and that of other ancient Philosophers, as if they were Fathers of the Church. Others take the Sun's part, and pretend 'tis injur'd in being made to pass only for a heap of violently agitated dust. The truth is, these notions spring not from concupiscence, they are caused by certain Pious Maximes, which in general are true, but applyed ill by them in particular. We ought to be averse from Novelty; it is true, we ought not to take delight in extenuating those, who by the consent of all the learned have been judg'd worthy esteem; this is also true. But after all this, when such things come under dispute as are only to be judg'd by Reason, known Truth ought to carry it against all these Maximes, and all the stead they can stand us in, is to make us more circumspect, lest by slight appearances we suffer our selves to be surpriz'd.

XXVII.

All those exterior qualities, which without augmenting our knowledge, contribute to perswade us that we are in the

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right; whilst they fix us to our own opinions, they make us also more impatient of being contradicted. Now there are many to be found which produce this effect in us.

Those who speak well, and with ease, are subject to be tenacious of their own sense, and difficultly undeceived: Because they are inclin'd to think they have the same advantage over the understandings, that they have over the tongues of others. This advantage is a visible and palpable one, whereas it is in the dark to them, that they want light and exactness in reasoning. Besides, this facility of utterance, gives their thoughts, though false, a certain luster, which dazzles even their own Eyes; whereas those who express themselves with difficulty, cast Clouds in the most apparent Truths, makes them appear in the dress of falsity, and are themselves often forc'd to yield, and seem overcome, because they want words wherewith to disintangle themselves from those gay and dazzling errors.

XXVIII.

What fortifies in those who have a good utterance this obstinate adhering to their own opinion, is that for the most part they draw the multitude to their side; because

because this never fails to give the advantage of Reason, to those who have it in words: And this publick approbation returning upon them, makes them still pleas'd with their own thoughts: For thence they take occasion to believe them conformable to the light of common sense. So that they receive from others what themselves lent them, and are in their turn cheated by such as were first deceived by them.

XXIX.

The self-same effect proceeds from many other exterior qualities, as moderation reservedness, calmness and patience. For they who are masters of these endowments, comparing themselves with others who have them not, cannot but prefer themselves before such, in these particulars; nor are they unjust to them in doing so. Now as advantages of this sort are much more conspicuous than those of the mind, and gain more credit and authority in the World; so their owners often cannot forbear preferring their judgment before that of others, who have not these qualities; not believing through a gross and palpable vanity, that they are more sharp-sighted than they, but in a more subtle and sensible manner. For besides that

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impression they receive from the approbation of the multitude, on whom they impose by these exterior ornaments, they apply themselves particularly to descant on the defects which they observe in the manner of others proposing their sentiments, and these at last they insensibly take for marks of defect of Reason.

XXX.

Nay there are some, who from the care they have had to beg of God that Light which is necessary to guide themselves by, in certain difficult occurrences, take occasion to prefer their opinions before those of others, in whom they observe not the same assiduity of Prayer. But these reflect, not that the genuine effect of Prayer is not so much to make us more knowing and clear-sighted, as to obtain for us a diffidence of our own skill and knowledge, and to make us more disposed to follow the light and advice of others. So that it often happens, that one inferior in Vertue shall see more in certain matters than another much above him. Nevertheless all this light and insight shall much less profit him, by reason of the ill use he makes thereof, then if by his Prayers he had obtain'd a docility to accept truth from another's hand, and the Grace to make good use thereof.

XXXI.

XXXI.

Those who have a quick imagination, and a strong and lively apprehension, are another kind of people subject to be wedded to their own sentiments; because this intense application of themselves to some particular objects, hinders them from giving their understandings so full a prospect of things as is necessary to frame an equitable judgment, which depends of the comparing several Reasons together. They are so fully taken up with some one Reason, that they allow no admittance to all the rest. And they properly resemble such as are too near the objects they look on, who therefore see nothing at all but what is precisely before their Eyes.

XXXII.

'Tis for many of these Reasons that Women, and particularly those who have good Wits, are subject to be much ty'd to their own sense. For the most part their Wit is a Wit of imagination; that is, it is lively, but extends its sight not far: Hence they are strongly taken up with what is near and strikes them, whereas they consider little any thing else: They speak well, and with ease, and so gain credit and esteem: They are moderate, and exact in all the duties of Devotion.

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And thus all things contribute to make them set a value on their own thoughts, for nothing happens that may breed in them a mistrust thereof.

XXXIII.

In fine, whatever raises men in the World, as Riches, Power, Authority, renders them insensibly more fix'd to their own sentiments; as well because these things make others complacent, and apt to believe what they say; as also because they are less accusom'd to be contradicted; whence they become more sensible and delicate. As no body for the most part tells them of their mistakes, so they accusom themselves to think that they commit none, and they are surpriz'd when any one goes about to make them reflect they are subject thereunto, as well as others.

XXXIV.

We should make ill use of these general observations, should we thence take occasion to attribute in particular this vicious adhesion to those in whom we observe the qualities capable to produce it; because they are not the necessary causes thereof. The use therefore we ought to make of them, is not to suspect and condemn any one in particular thereupon; but only to
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conclude, (when we treat with such as by their condition or disposition of mind may be subject to this fault, whether really they are guilty thereof or no) that it always behoves us to stand more strictly on our guard, not to thwart, without great reason, their opinions and sentiments. For this pre-caution can never do harm, whereas it may be of great concern in many occurrences.


XXXV.

But as it is observable, that as there is more danger in contradicting some persons than others, so are there some opinions whereof we ought to be more wary. And such are those which are not peculiar to some one person of the place where we live, but are establish'd there by an universal approbation : For by opposing opinions of this kind, it seems we would raise ourselves above all others ; and we give occasion to all those who are prepossess'd with them to concern themselves for them so much the more warmly, as they believe this common concern of theirs arises, not because the opinions are their own, but those of the whole community. Now the malignity of our Nature is infinitely more lively, and more active, when it is under some honest pretext, and can dis-

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guise, and hide it self from it self, under the colour of that zeal which is due to Superiors, and to the community whereof we are Members.

XXXVI.



This observation is of utmost importance for conserving Peace ; And that we may comprehend the extent thereof, we must add, that in all Bodies, in all Societies; there are for the most part certain Maximes that bear sway, which are fram'd by the judgment of those who are in possession of the belief, and by their authority, Lord it over the minds of all the rest, It often happens, that those who propose these, are not very tenacious of them, because they seem not even to themselves very clear ; but this hinders not the inferior sort, (who receive these Maximes without examination on the bare authority of the proposers) from looking on them as certain beyond controul, and (since they usually place their glory in maintaining them at what price soever) from growing hot and full of zeal against their opposers. These Maximes and opinions sometimes concern only matters of Speculation and Doctrine. Here one kind of Philosophy is in vogue, there another. In some places all opinions tending to severity,

city are acceptable, in other they all lie under suspicion. Sometimes these opinions have relation to the esteem we ought to have of certain persons, and principally of such as are of the same Society; because those who bear sway there by the credit they have, give each their rank and place according to the manner of their treating them, or speaking of them. And this place and esteem becomes confirmed to them, by the multitude which authorizes the judgment of the Superiours, and is always ready to defend it.

XXXVII.

Now, as these judgments may be erroneous and extravagant, it may happen, that particular Members of the same Society may not approve of them, and may think these places misbestowed. In this case if the dissenters use not a great deal of discretion, and many precautions not to exasperate those with whom they live, by the difference of their opinions; they'll hardly avoid the incurring the censure of presumption and temerity; nay, scarce prevent what they have discovered of their sentiments from being carried far beyond their intentions, and making themselves to be accused of an absolute contempt towards those on whom

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they do not bestow all the respect that others do.

XXXVIII.

To avoid then these inconveniences, and several others one may fall into by opposing commonly received opinions; we ought, in what Place or Society soever we be, to make a Draught or Map of all the opinions in vogue there, and of the place and rank each of them holds there, that we may have all the consideration for them which Charity and Truth can permit.

It may happen that many of these opinions seem false, and that others have not their due places allotted them. But our first care ought to be, to distrust our selves in this particular. For if in Man there be a certain natural weakness which disposes him to accept without examination the impressions he receives from others; there is also a malignity no less natural, inclining him to contradict the sentiments of others, and particularly of such as live in repute. Now this latter vice is more to be shun'd than the other; because it is more opposite to humane Society, and betokens a greater depravation of the Heart and Mind: So that to resist this, we ought as much as we can to favour the opinions,

nions of others, to be well pleas'd that we can approve of them, and even to take their being received for an omen of their being true.

XXXIX.

That impatience which makes us with heat contradict others, springs but from our not being able to endure without trouble, that others should entertain opinions different from ours. 'Tis because these sentiments are contrary to our sense, that shocks us; not because they are contrary to Truth. Were it our design to benefit those we contradict, we should take other measures, and proceed other ways, we propose to our selves only the bringing of them under our opinions, and raising our selves above their Heads; or rather we desire by contradicting them to be reveng'd of them for the displeasure they do us in thwarting our sentiments. So that in this behaviour there is found at the same time Pride, which breeds this spite, want of Charity, which hurries us to take revenge, by an indiscreet opposition and hypocrisie, which covers under the pretext of our love for Truth, and a Charitable desire of disabusing others, all these deprav'd motions; Whereas in effect we only seek to satisfie our selves. And thus

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thus one may very justly apply to us the saying of the Wise Man, That the admonitions of him who intends an injury, are false and deceitful. *Corruptio mendax in ore contumeliosi.* Not that he always says what is false; but because he has a mind to vex and insult over us, whilst he would seem only to design our profit by correcting some fault.

XL.

We ought then to look on this impatience, which makes us without distinction engage our selves against whatever seems to us untrue, as a very considerable fault, and which very often is much greater than the pretended error we would deliver others from. Thus as we ought in the first place to be charitable to our selves; so our first care and pains ought to be about our selves, endeavouring to settle our minds, so as to be able to endure without disturbance the opinions of others, which may seem false to us, to the end we may never enter the lists against them, but with a desire of benefiting their abettors.

XLI.

Were we possess'd with this sole desire, we should without difficulty acknowledge that, though all error be ill, there are
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nevertheless many which we ought not our selves to destroy, because often the remedy would be worse than the disease; and applying our selves to the cure of these small evils, we should put our selves out of condition to redress such as are really of concern. And therefore, though our Saviour JESUS CHRIST was full of all Truth, as St. *John* says; yet we find not that he undertook the freeing Man from other errors than such as concerned God, and the means of his Salvation. He was fully acquainted with all the extravagant opinions about natural beings; he knew better than any else, in what true Eloquence consisted; to him all past events were perfectly known; yet did not he commissionate his Apostles to combat Mens errors in natural Philosophy, to teach Men how to speak well, or to rectifie a great number of falsities in matters of fact wherewith Histories were stuffed.

XLII.

We are not oblig'd to be more charitable than the Apostles were: When we perceive therefore, that by contradicting certain opinions concerning humane Sciences and Affairs, we vex and exasperate many, and give them occasion of making rash and

and unjust censures ; we not only may dispense with our selves not to oppose such opinions, but are often obliged to it by the Laws of Charity.

XLIII.

But the practice of this reservedness ought to be intire and full ; we must not think it sufficient to abstain from openly contradicting those we are obliged to manage wth this moderation : We ought to trust no body with our opinions of them, because that serves for nothing but to disburden our selves to no purpose ; and there is often more danger in telling to others our opinions of such persons as have esteem and authority in a community, and reign over their minds, than to the parties themselves ; because those to whom we design our thoughts, having often less Light, less Equity, less Charity, and more false zeal and eagerness, receive greater wounds than those other would : And lastly, because there are very few good secret-keepers, so that whatsoever we say comes to his Ear who is concern'd, and that often told so, that the way of telling causes a greater pique than the thing it self. So that there is almost no other means left of avoiding these inconveniences, than by being generally reserv'd to all.

XLIV.

XLIV

It is no easie matter to wave a Confident too, when there's something which we approve not that lies at our Heart ; we believe our selves oblig'd to keep it close. Self-love naturally seeks to disburden it self, and we are pleas'd at least to have one witness of our reservedness. That malignant vapour which always drives us on to contradict what we like not, being shut up in an unmortified mind, makes continual efforts to get out ; and often the displeasure it causes grows greater by the violence we use to keep it in. But, the more lively these motions are, the more certain, (we ought to conclude) is our obligation of repressing them, and that we ought not to intermeddle in conducting others, when we have so much need to labour about guiding our selves.

XLV.

Thus by resisting that desire we have of talking of the faults of others, when prudence permits us not to discover them, it will come to pass, that we shall either know or find afterwards, we were in the wrong, and judg'd amiss, or some occasion will happen of discovering them with profit, and so we shall practice what the Scripture commands in these words. *Bonus*

sensus

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*sensus usq; ad tempus abscondet verba illius,
& labia multorum enarrabunt sensum illius.*

Or if neither the one nor the other come to pass, however we shall enjoy the fruit of Peace, and may justly hope that reward for our reservedness which we should have lost by delivering our selves up to the guidance of our Passions.

XLVI.

If we ought to have regard, as I have said, to the Quality, the Spirit, and Condition of the Persons we are about to contradict; much more ought we to consider our selves, and the place we hold in their esteem. For since we must not oppose the opinions of others, but with a design of doing them some good; we must see what likelihood we have of succeeding; and as the success lies in our perswading them, and the only means to do this, are Authority and Reason, we must further know well how far we can prevail by both these means.

Without doubt the weaker of the two is Reason, and those who have only that Card to play, cannot promise themselves any great success, since the greatest part of the world are led by Authority: It is therefore touching this we ought particularly to examine our selves; and if we perceive

perceive we have not that credit, that esteem which is necessary to procure a favourable reception for what we say; we ought to believe God does dispense with us for speaking our minds concerning those things which appear to us blame-worthy, and that what he expects at our hands in such occasions, is reservedness and silence. In going by any other Rule, we but discredit our selves, and quarrel with no benefit to any, and disturb the peace of others, and our own too.

XLVII.

The advice *Plato* gives of not pretending to reform and establish in Commonwealths any thing but what he shall find himself able to get approv'd and allow'd by those who compose it: *Tantum contendere, quantum probare civibus tuis possis*, has not only relation to States and Commonwealths, but to all particular Societies, nor is it only the thought of a Heathen, but a Rule of Christianity, taught by *St. Austin* as absolutely necessary for the Government of the Church. *The true Peacemaker*, says this Blessed Saint, is he who corrects what he can of the faults he sees, and who, by an equitable judgment disallowing those he cannot mend, ceases not to tolerate them with an unshaken constancy.

Now.

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Now if this Holy Father prescribe this Rule, even to those who are entrusted with the Government of the Church; if he command them to look on Peace as their principal end, and to pass by an infinite number of faults, rather than disturb it: How much more necessary is it for those who are entrusted with nothing, and who have on them only the obligation common to all Christians to contribute what lies in their power to the good of their Brethren.

XLVIII.

As in politick Government we call it sedition, when any one endeavours a reformation of disorders, without having right to do so from the place and rank he holds. So in private communities it is a species of the same Crime, when particular persons, who are in no authority, set themselves up against the sentiments establish'd there, and by their opposition disturb the Peace of the whole Body. Nevertheless this ought only to be understood of such disorders as may be tolerated, and which being balanc'd against the disquiet they may cause, shall be found less considerable. For some there are of that Nature, that even particular persons lie under an absolute necessity of opposing;

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sing; but it is not of these we now discourse.

XLIX.

Nevertheless we ought not to extend these Maxims, so far as generally in conversation, to scruple our owning a dislike of certain opinions of those with whom we live. This would be to destroy Society, instead of establishing it; for this restraint would so set one on the rack, that it would make one prefer privacy before company. We must therefore reduce our silence to things of importance, and such as we see others concern themselves most for; and, even in these, we may find ways so to thwart them, as it will be impossible they should take offence. And this ought to be our particular study; commerce and conversation not being able to subsist, when that freedom of owning our being of different opinions from others is taken away.

L.

So it is a matter of wondrous great use to study with care how to propose our sentiments in such a sweet, reserv'd, and agreeable way, that none thence may take occasion of disgust. This by Men of the World is practis'd to admiration towards your Great Ones, concupiscence never failing.

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failing to furnish sufficient means for doing it : And we should find the like as well as they, were Charity in us as active as concupiscence is in them ; and if it made us as apprehensive of offending our Brethren, whom we ought to look on as above us in the Kingdom of JESUS CHRIST, as worldlings are of displeasing those their interest is to manage for the increase of their fortunes.

LI.

The practice of this duty is so important, so necessary during the whole course of our life, that we ought to have a particular care to be well exercis'd and habituated therein. For often we disgust not others so much by our contrary opinions, as by the fierce, presumptuous, passionate, disdainful, and insulting way of proposing them. We should learn therefore to contradict civilly, and humbly, and to look on our faults herein as very considerable.

LII.

It is a hard matter to comprize in particular Rules and Precepts, all the different ways of contradicting others without offence. They spring from present circumstances, and that charitable fear of offending our Brother, which makes us find them

them out. But there are certain general defects that we ought always to have in view to avoid them, and which are the ordinary Spring-heads, whence flow these ungrateful ways. The first may be called the *Ascendant*, that is an imperious way of telling ones mind, which few can endure; as well because it shews a fierce and haughty mind, abhor'd naturally by every one, as because it thereby seems one would exercise Dominion, and Lord it over others Wills. This *Air* is sufficiently known, and every one ought to observe in particular whence it rises.

LIII.

It is a kind of this ascendant way to appear angry, and reproach others, because they do not believe us. This is as it were to accuse those with whom we speak of sottishness, for not understanding our Arguments; or of wilfulness for not yielding to them. On the contrary, we ought to be perswaded, that whom our Reasons do not convince, our reproaches will not move. For these give no new light; and betoken only, that we prefer our judgments before theirs, and that we are unconcern'd, whether we offend them or no.

LIV.

LIV.

It is also a very great fault to speak in a decisive tone, as if what we advanc'd could not in reason be question'd. For those we speak to in this manner, are either offended because they are made to understand that they question what is out of dispute; or else it seems, that we have a mind to take from them the liberty of examining and judging by their own proper light, and this they look on as an unjust domination.

LV.

It was to make the *Religious* shun this offensive way, that a Holy Saint prescribes unto them, to season all their discourses with the Salt of doubtfulness, opposite to this decisive and dogmatick humour: *Omnis sermo vester dubitationis sale sit conditus*; because he thought Humility permitted not, that one should arrogate to ones-self so clear a knowledge of truth, as to leave no room for doubting it.

LVI.

Who are of this positive humour, do not only shew that they doubt not themselves of what they advance, but also that they think no body else can doubt thereof. Now this is to exact too much from others, and to arrogate too much to themselves.

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Every Body will be judge of his own opinions, and not embrace any but because he approves thereof. All that is got by the decisive way, is to engage the hearers in searching more, than otherwise they would, Reasons to doubt of what is said; because this imperious way excites a secret desire of contradicting, and finding out that what is propos'd with so great assurance, is not certain, or at least not to that degree that was imagin'd.

LVII.

Heat and eagerness for our opinions, is a fault different from those we now observ'd, which are consistent with coldness and moderation. This raises a belief that we are not only wedded to our opinions by Reason, but also by Passion; this raises in many a prejudice against these opinions, and makes an impression in them quite contrary to what it designs. For the very suspicion that an opinion has been embraced by Passion rather than by Reason, renders it suspected to them. They resist it as an unjust piece of violence offer'd them, to make things enter by force into their judgments. Nay, often taking these signs of Passion for Injuries, they are induc'd to defend themselves with the same heat they are attacked.

LVIII.

LVIII.

It is so visible a fault in disputes to come to terms of contempt and contumely, that there is no need of advertising the World thereof. But it is not amiss to observe, that there are certain rudenesses and incivilities bordering on contempt, though they may come from another Principle. It is enough we make those we contradict believe that they are in the wrong, and that they are deceived; without letting them know by harsh and mortifying words, that there's not the least spark of Reason to be found in them. This change of opinion we would bring them to, is hard enough for Nature to submit to, without adding over and above new hardnesses. These harsh terms never can be good but in written answers, where one has more mind to perswade the Reader of the little sufficiency of our adversary, than our adversary himself.

LIX.

Lastly, that driness which consists not so much in the harshness of the terms, as in the want of certain lenitives, is an usual cause of offence. For, therein is imply'd a certain kind of indifferency and contempt. This leaves the wound made by contradiction without any Oyl to allay the
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the smart. Now 'tis not respect enough to Men to put them to pain, without resenting it, and endeavouring to assuage it: And this it is, this driness does not do; because it properly consists in not doing it, and in saying harsh things harshly. We manage those we love and esteem otherwise, and so directly testifie to those we use thus, that we have neither affection nor esteem for them.

LX.

No body is free from the obligation of endeavouring to avoid these faults. Yet are there some, whose obligation is greater than that of others; because there are some, in whom these faults appear more visibly, and are more offensive. The ascendant, for Example, is not so great a fault in a Superior, in a Man of years or quality, as in an Inferior, a Young Man, or one of small note. And as much may be said of the other defects we have observ'd, because they are really less offensive, when they are found in persons of quality, and authority. For in these they are lost almost in that confidence. we justly owe to them for their place and dignity, and so appear so much the less: But they are beyond measure offensive in the common sort, from whom

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we

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we expect a Man modest and reserv'd behaviour.

LXI.

The learned, as such, would gladly arrogate to themselves the right of speaking dogmatically of all things. But they are in the wrong. The World has not allow'd this privilege to true Science, but to that they are acquainted with. If ours be not such, it is all one in respect of others, as if it were not true, and so from it we derive no right of speaking decisively; since whatever we say, ought always to bear a proportion to the understandings of those to whom we speak, and this proportion depends on the esteem and belief they have for us, and not on the Truth.

LXH.

To speak therefore decisively, and with authority, we must have at once Truth and Credit; and we almost always offend when either of these two are wanting. Hence it follows, that persons of dwarfish stature, of ill meen and aspect; and generally whoever have outward and natural defects, how wise and learned soever they be, are more oblig'd than others to speak with modesty, and to shun that ascendant and authoritative deportment.

For

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For if these be not of very extraordinary deserts, it seldom happens they gain any respect. They are almost always look'd on with a kind of contempt, because their disfigurements strikes the Senses, and seizes on the imagination, whilst few take either notice of their Spiritual Endowments, or are even capable of discovering them.

LXIII.

We ought from these remarks to conclude, that the principal means not to exasperate, are reduc'd to two, viz. silence and modesty: That is to say, to our suppressing such sentiments as may offend, when the benefit to be expected from thence deserves not exposing our selves to it; and to observing so many cautions, when we shall be oblig'd to speak our minds, that we may as much as possible banish what is harsh out of our opposition.

LXIV.

But we shall never prosper in the practice of these Rules, if our endeavours only aim at the outside, and not at an inward reformation. The Heart is the Rule of our words, says the Wise-man. *Cor Sapiens erudiet os ejus.* We ought therefore to labour to acquire this Wisdom, this Humility of Heart; deploring before Almighty God with groans the motions of pride

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which we feel; begging without cease his Grace to repress them; and endeavouring to obtain those dispositions from whence naturally this reservedness flows, and that without trouble or pain, when we are fully establish'd in them.

LXV.

To this end we ought to have a lively sentiment of the danger we incur by offending others, through our indiscretions. For the wounds of the Soul have this, common to those of the Body, that though they are not all mortal of themselves, yet they may all become such if irritated and envenom'd. The least scratch causes the Gangrene, if malignant Humours flow to the place that's hurt. Thus the least disgust given any one by an indiscreet opposition, may be a cause of his Spiritual Death and ours; because it may give birth to a rancour, which may increase in the sequel to that height, as to extinguish Charity both in him and us. This coolness may dispose him to take in evil part words, which, had he not his Heart envenom'd, he might have pass'd over without trouble. Hence he'll be less reserv'd in his words against us, hence perhaps we shall be induc'd to use harsh ones to him on other occasions; nay, occasions them.

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themselves will grow more frequent; and this coolness chang'd into hatred, may banish Charity quite away.

LXVI.

Not are these accidents only possible, but ordinary; for it rarely happens that these enmities and hatreds that kill the Soul, have not had such for their fore-runners; nay, that they have not taken hold on those little coolings produc'd by indiscretions. Wherefore I wonder not that the Wise-man begs of God with so much instance, that he would set a Seal on his Lips; *Super Labia mea signaculum certum*, lest his Tongue should be his ruine, *Ne Lingua mea me perdat*: And I easily apprehend he begs in these words, that no word should come thence without his order; as nothing is taken from a place under Seal, without his order who has put it there. That is, he desir'd to be enabled to watch so exactly over all his words, that not one might come from him unsquar'd according to the Laws of God, which are the same with those of Charity; for should we only apply our selves to regulate such as grossly and visibly swerve thence, it would be impossible to hinder many others from slipping from us, which might be of very dangerous consequence.

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LXVII.

The condition of Man in this life deserves our wonder. He is not only always walking on towards an Eternity of Happiness or Misery; but every step, every action, every word often directs and determines him towards one of these two states; since either his Salvation or Perdition may depend thereon, though they appear of small moment. We are all on the brink of a Precipice, and often the least false step is sufficient to cast us headlong down. An indiscreet word puts our mind on the sudden out of its steady posture and temper, and after that our own weight is capable of pressing us down even to the Abyfs.

LXVIII.

It is not sufficient to humour and manage, but we must respect and honour others; there being nothing which can make us more averse from offending them, than this interior respect which we bear them. Servants find no trouble in not contradicting their Masters, nor Courtiers in not displeasing their Princes; because that interior subjection they find in themselves, sweetens the sownerness of their sentiments, and insensibly regulates their words. We should have the same disposition

sition in respect of all Christians, did we look on them as our Superiors and Masters, as *St. Paul* orders we should; did we consider JESUS CHRIST in them, did we remember that he has put them in his place, and did we, instead of applying our selves to find fault in them, only take notice of the reasons we have to esteem and prefer them before our selves.

LXIX.

But above all, we ought to endeavour not to look on this obligation we have to silence, to reservedness, to a modesty in our words, as a hard and troublesome necessity; but rather to consider it as a happy, favourable, and advantageous one: Since nothing is more fit to entertain humility in us, which is the greatest happiness of a Christian. Hence we ought to look on as grateful and lovely, whatever engages us to it; for Example, want of Authority, and all natural defects which induce it. For on the one side it is true, that Men without Authority and Credit, are oblig'd to speak with more modesty and circumspection than others, what knowledge, what light soever they have; but it is as true, that they ought to hold themselves much the happier for it.

LXX.

It is no small danger to have dominion over minds, to be able to give them what turns, and what impressions we please. For hence it happens, that we communicate to them all the errors we are in, and all the Rash Judgments we have framed : Whereas those are exempt from this danger, who are not rais'd to this height : if they are deceiv'd, 'tis only for themselves, nor are they to answer for others. They see not in the crowd about them those favourable opinions of them, which are the greatest setters up, and nourishers of Vanity ; and as the World little depends on them, so they are inclin'd to depend as little on it, and have a great facility to consider only God Almighty in all their actions.

LXXI.

Not that we ought directly to seek after this want of authority and esteem, or that we have not reason to humble our selves, when our own faults have brought these wants upon us. But on what score soever they happen to us, though we are not oblig'd to love the cause, yet ought we to look on the effects as favourable ; since this condition cuts off from us this nourishment of pride, it exempts us from
sharing

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sharing in many things of great danger; and by obliging us to an extraordinary moderation in speech, shelters us from innumerable perils. It is true, we are hereby depriv'd too of the good of edifying others: But as God has more particularly charg'd us with our own Salvation, than that of our Neighbours; it seems we have more reason to desire to be in this condition, than to grieve for being there, and that those who are reduc'd to it on what score soever, have reason to say to God with joy and confidence: *Bonum mihi quia humiliasti me, ut discam justificationes tuas.*

LXXII.

What we have already said touching the means of not offending others in thwarting their opinions, gives us much light to learn how we ought to humour and manage them when they are in passion; since even these opinions are a great ingredient to that, and they are piqu'd at, hearing them oppos'd only, because they are in love with, and wedded to them by passion. The spite and rancour they feel when any crosses their wills, springs from the same Fountain with their resentment, when their opinions are contradicted; that is, from a natural tyranny by which they

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would domineer over all, and make all subject to themselves. But since such a tyranny appears too unreasonable when it shews it self bare-fac'd, self-love has a great care to throw over these passions a veil of Justice; by perswading them they are not troubled at the opposition they find, but because it is unjust, and against reason.

LXXIII.

But though this sentiment be an unjust one, and such as should not be, yet it is not fit we should endanger the stirring it up by our indiscretions; and it may often happen, that as the party who is offended, because we follow not his inclinations, is in the wrong; we may be more so in not following of them: Since we may be wanting in some duty whereunto Reason obliges us, and be the cause of the faults this spite shall makehim commit in his resentment.

We must therefore study to know what we owe to the inclinations of others; since otherwise it is impossible to avoid complaints, murmurs and quarrels, which are contrary to tranquility of Mind and Charity, and by consequence to the state of a life truly Christian.

LXXIV.

LXXIV.

Now in the first place it is observable, that we do not here seek out the means of pleasing, but of not displeasing others, and not drawing on us their hatred; because that is sufficient to maintain the Peace we discourse of. It is true, we should succeed better, did we gain their affections, but often this brings with it other inconveniences. We must content our selves with not making our selves hated, and with avoiding reproaches and complaints: And this is what we cannot do but by studying the inclinations of others, and following them as much as Justice will permit.

LXXV.

Amongst these inclinations there are some which we may call just, others indifferent, and some unjust. We must never positively satisfy those that are unjust: Neither is it always necessary we should oppose them: When this happens, we ought always to compare the Good with the Evil, and see whether from this opposition we have reason to expect more of the one than it can cause of the other. For we may apply to all sorts of people the Rule St. Austin gives for reprehending Great ones; *That if it be to be fear'd, lest*
being

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being exasperated by reproof, they be induc'd to do a greater evil, than is the good we would procure them, it is then the Council of Clarity not to reprehend them, and not a pretext of Concupiscence. Now we ought not to imagine there needs but little Vertue thus to suffer with patience the defects we think our selves unable to correct; and that the freedom making us valiantly to correct and reprehend disorders, is more rare and difficult, than the disposition of one who in the presence of God fights for them, who uses violence to himself not to take notice of them, and who far from taking hence an occasion of contemning others, makes use thereof to humble himself by contemplating the common misery of Mankind. For this disposition at the same time contains both the practice of Mortification, in repressing that natural impetuosity which sets us against those we are not in a condition to amend; that of Humility in giving us a more lively Idea of the corruption of our own Nature; and that of Charity, in making us patiently bear with the defects of our Neighbour.

LXXVI.

One of the greatest defects of Man is, that his passions mix themselves every where,

where, and that he consults them in choosing for the most part even the Vertues he intends to practice: He has a mind to reprove those he ought content himself to suffer; and is content to suffer such as he ought to reprehend. He is busie with others, when God requires he should only meddle with himself; and he has a mind to correct himself only, when God would have him employ'd about others. If he cannot practice certain actions of Vertue which run in his head, he leaves all; instead of taking notice that this inability God puts him in of practicing such Vertues, gives him means to practice others, which would be so much the more acceptable to his Divine Majesty, as his will and choice had the less share therein.

LXXVII.

It is also another fault to take upon us the opposing even the most unjust passions; when others may do it with more benefit than we; because it is evident, that this over-forwardness comes from a kind of malignant humour, pleasing it self in being troublesome to others. For this humour mingles it self in just reprehensions, as well as unjust ones, and is well pleased to have just pretexts to thwart others; because they whom it contristates are the
more

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more troubled, the more they have reason to be so.

LXXVIII.

The same Rule obliges us to use the least disobliging, and the most courteous ways we can, when we are under an obligation of doing any thing that may be ungrateful to our neighbour. Nor ought we to think our selves without fault, when we are satisfied that we have reason as to the matter it self, but have no regard to the manner and way we go about it; when we take no care to sweeten what may be bitter in our proceeding, nor to perswade those whose passions we thwart, that we are thereunto induc'd by necessity, not by humour or inclination.

LXXIX.

I call those humours indifferent, whose objects being of themselves not evil, may be sought after without Passion, and with Reason, though perhaps they are pursu'd with a vitious adhesion. Now in things of this nature, we have more liberty of complying with the inclinations of others. For we are not constituted their Judges; we must have full evidence, or else no right to judge that they have too great an adhesion to objects otherwise innocent. Nay we do not even know whether such adhesions

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hessions be not necessary to them: since there are many who would fall into dangerous conditions, were they on a sudden debarr'd of all things they have an affection for. Moreover, prudence and circumspection ought to be us'd in destroying these affections, and we must not assume to our selves the right of judging what manner one ought to proceed therein. In fine, it is often to be fear'd lest we do them more harm by the rancour we raise in them, by opposing indiscreetly such Passions as are call'd Innocent, than good by the advice and counsel we give them.

LXXX.

Indiscretions therefore may be committed in talking sharply against the excess of Neatness, before such as are given thereunto; against the uselesness of Pictures, before such as are taken therewith; against Verses and Poetry, before those who are addicted that way. These Advertisements are a kind of Medicines: They have their bitterness, are ungrateful not without danger. They ought therefore to be administred with the same cautions with which Physicians dispense theirs. It is the part of an ignorant Empirick to propose them promiscuously to all whatsoever.

LXXXI.

LXXXI.

Not to be certain that we should benefit others by opposing their humours, is sufficient to make us comply therewith, even when we suspect they are addicted to them: To undertake their cure there must be knowledge and address; but if either of these be wanting, it is enough to make us comply with their desires in things that are not bad of themselves. For in this case we have liberty to frame our actions according to the general Law of Charity, which ought to dispose us so as to oblige and serve all: And the benefit of gaining their affections by testifying our love towards them, being always to be found in this condescendence, we ought to be sure of an advantage both greater, and more evident, before we endanger the loss of it.

LXXXII

Those Passions I call Just, in which we are by certain Laws oblig'd to comply with others; though perhaps they have no right to exact from us this compliance. For as we have a greater obligation to comply with our own duty, than to correct the faults of others; so Reason requires that we should with simplicity perform what we owe to them, and by doing
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so, take from them all subject of complaint, without troubling our selves whether this be exacted by them either too eagerly, or too imperiously.

LXXXIII.

Now to comprehend the extent of these devoirs, we ought to know, that we owe some things to our neighbour by certain Laws of Justice; which are properly call'd Laws; others by the bare Laws of Civility; the obligation to which springs from a consent amongst Men, agreeing to blame such as shall be defective in them. It is by these latter Laws that we owe to those we live amongst such civilities as are agreed on amongst persons of Honour, though otherwise no express Law commands them; that we owe to them certain Services according to the degrees of relation we have with them; that we ought to correspond with them in open-breastedness and confidence, in proportion to what they are to us. For Men have established all these Laws. There are certain things we ought to do for such as we have contracted a familiarity with to such a degree, which we may refuse to others; nor shall they have right therefore to take it ill at our hands.

LXXXIV.

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LXXXIV.

We should endeavour to be exact in the performance of all these duties; otherwise it is impossible to avoid the complaints, murmurs, and aversion of others. For it is incredible how much those who have but a small share of Vertue are exasperated, when we are wanting in the duties of acknowledgment and civility establish'd in the World; and how much things of this nature cool that little Charity they have. They are Objects which trouble them, always exasperate them, and hinder that edification they might receive from the good they see in us; because of these failcurs wherewith they are in particular wounded, they are infinitely more sensible, than of Vertues which concern not them.

LXXXV.

Thus Charity obliging us to compassionate the weakness of our Brethren, and to take from before them all subjects of temptation, at the same time obliges us to be careful in complying with these obligations. But, not Charity alone, but Justice it self, and Gods Eternal Law ordains as much as may easily be shewn, both as to the Testimonies of Gratitude, and the Devoirs of Civility, to which
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the others whereof we have spoke may be redue'd, as open-breastedness, confidence, application, which are but species thereof.

The origen of all the Gratitude we owe to our Neighbour, is, that as God makes use of their Ministry to convey to us several benefits of Body and Soul; so also he desires that our Gratitude should re-ascend to him by Men, and lay hold on the Instruments he makes use of; and as he hides himself in the benefits he bestows, and wills, that Men should be the visible causes thereof; he requires also, that they should take his place, and receive from us the exterior effects of acknowledgement which we owe him. So that we violate the order of God, in satisfying our selves with an acknowledgement towards him, and being ungrateful towards those whom he has employ'd to make us feel the effects of his Bounty.

LXXXVI.

Men, by a motion of Interest, have an Eye on those who are indebted to them: God Almighty has so too, according to Scripture, but upon the score of a Justice perfectly Pure, perfectly disinterested. For it is this the Wise Man says in
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these words : *Deus prosector est ejus qui reddit gratiam.* We ought to make use of this two-fold attention, to excite ours, and to keep our Eyes fix'd both on Men who expect these duties from us, and on God who commands us to pay them.

LXXXVII.

We ought not to pretend exemption upon the score of the disinterested ones, and Piety of those we are oblig'd to, or upon their expecting nothing from us. Let them be never so disinterested, they cease not to see what is their due, and it is rare they should be unconcern'd to that degree, as not to resent at all our small care in acquitting our selves. Besides, though they proceed not so far as to upbraid us, yet is it easie for them to take a certain turn which may much what have the same effect as an humane resentment. They say they cannot put out their own Eyes, not to see that these persons use them ill; but they heartily dispense with them. Thus while they dispense with it, they cease not to blame their carriage; and hence they insensibly come to love them less, and at least to shew them fewer tokens of their affection.

LXXXVIII.

LXXXVIII.

The same happens in the duties of Civility. Even those who are the most free from the World cannot but take notice when we are wanting therein, and others are effectively offended. When by our senses we are not perswaded that others love and esteem us, it is hard the Heart should be, or at least that this perswasion should be a lively one. Now it is this civility that has this effect on our senses, and by our senses on our minds. If we be wanting in civility, this negligence is never wanting to produce a certain relenting in others, which often passes from the Senses to the Heart.

LXXXIX.

Men are perswaded, that civility is due to them, and it is really so, according as it is practic'd in the World; but they know not the reason why. If they had no other right than Custom to exact it, it were not due to them, for Custom is not enough to enslave others to certain troublesome actions. We must ascend higher to find out the Fountain head, as well here, as in what was said of Gratitude: And if it be true, as a Servant of God has said, that nothing is more civil than a good Christian, it follows that he must have

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have some Divine Reasons obliging him thereunto; and what we are about to say may help to discover them.

XC.

Men are link'd together by an infinite number of wants, obliging them out of necessity to live in Society; each particular not being able to subsist without others: And this Society is conformable to Gods Order, since he permits these wants for this end. In this Order therefore is contained whatsoever is necessary to maintain this Society, and God in some sort commands it by that natural Law which obliges each part to conserve the whole. Now it is of absolute necessity for keeping up Society amongst Men, that they should respect and love one another; for contempt and hatred certainly dis-unite and make breaches. There are a number of small matters highly necessary for life which are bestowed *gratis*, and which being not to be sold, can only be had for love. Moreover, this Society being compos'd of Men full of love and esteem for themselves; should they not have a care reciprocally to please and humour one another, it would prove a loose company of people ill pleas'd and dissatisfied amongst themselves, and so could never
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continue united. But since this mutual love and esteem appears not outwardly, they have thought convenient to establish amongst themselves certain devoirs, which should be so many tokens of respect and affection. Whence it necessarily follows, that to be wanting in these duties, is to shew a disposition contrary to love and respect. Thus these exterior actions are due from us to those to whom we owe the dispositions they betoken; and we do them wrong when we fail therein; because this omission denotes certain sentiments which we ought not to have for them.

XCI.

Wherefore we may, nay we ought to be exact in complying with the duties of civility, Men have establish'd: And the Motives and Reasons of this exactness, are not only very just, but also grounded on the Law of God. We must comply therewith, to the end others may not imagine that we slight, or have an indifference for such to whom we do pay these respects; to the end we may maintain humane Society, to conserve which, it is just every one should lend his helping hand, since every one thence reaps considerable advantages; and lastly, to the end we
may

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may avoid the open or inward reproaches
of those we should thus be wanting to;
which are the sources of those divisions
which trouble the tranquility of this life,
and of that Christian Peace which hath
been the subject of this discourse.

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I.

IT is not enough that we may conserve Peace amongst Men, to avoid offending them: We must over and above know how to suffer them when they miss in their duty to us: For, it is impossible to preserve inward Peace, if we be touchy for whatever they can do or say contrary to our humours and sentiments: And it is very hard that an inward discontent once conceiv'd, should not appear without, and dispose us to behave our selves towards such as may have offended us, so as to give offence to them in their turn: Thus by degrees dissensions increase, and often are carried on to the utmost extremities.

II.

We ought therefore to rise even in the birth these dissensions and quarrels. And

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on these occasions self-love never fails to suggest to us, that the means of succeeding herein is to correct such as incommode us, and to make them yield to reason, by letting them know, that they are to blame to deal with us as they do: Thence it is, that we are so apt to complain of what others do, to make their defects known, to the end we may either amend in them what we dislike, or else punish them by the spight these complaints of ours may raise in them, and by the dis-esteem they draw on them.

III.

But if we our selves were truly guided by Reason, we should easily see, that the design of establishing Peace upon the reformation of others, is a ridiculous foolish one, even herein, because 'tis impossible it should succeed. The more we complain of the behaviour of others, the more we exasperate, without correcting them. We shall make our selves esteem'd touchy, fierce and proud: And the worst is, that this opinion thus rais'd of us, will not be altogether unjust; since really these complaints proceed not but from our niceness and pride: Nay, even those who will own that they understand the justice of our cause, and shall believe we have wrong done

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done us, will for all that be scandaliz'd at our too much nicety. And as we are all naturally inclin'd to Justifie our selves, if those we complain against have never so little address, they will so tell the same tale, that the wrong will be laid at our doors. For the same want of Equity and right Judgment which make people commit those faults we complain of, for the most part hinder them too from owning or seeing them, and make them take for true and just whatever they can make use of for their own justification.

IV.

But if those we level our complaints against be rais'd above us by their Quality, Credit or Authority, such complaints will yet prove of less use, and of more danger. They can but give us that malignant and short transient satisfaction of having them condemn'd by those we make our complaints to, and afterwards they produce a number of consequences, both dangerous and permanent, in exasperating such persons against us, and breaking asunder all the unity we might have with them:

V.

Prudence therefore obliges us to take a quite different way; absolutely to break

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off that chimerical design of thinking to mend whatever we shall find amiss in others, and to endeavour to ground our peace and quiet on reforming our selves, and moderating our own Passions. Neither the Minds nor Tongues of others are at our dispose: We shall not be call'd to account for their actions, but as far as we shall have given occasion of them; but we shall give a strict one of our own words, of our own deeds, of our own thoughts. We are charg'd with the obligation of taking pains about our selves, and correcting our own faults; if we comply'd with this as we ought, nothing from abroad would be able to disquiet us.

VI.

In temporal matters we never fail to prefer an assured benefit of our own, before an uncertain one for others. If we did the like in matters of our Eternal Salvation, we should suddenly perceive, that the reasons for complaint are for the most part false and condemn'd by what is truly such; for in waving these complaints, we procure an assured benefit to our selves: Whereas it is very uncertain whether our complaints will profit our Neighbour. Wherefore then do we loose the fruit of
our

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our own Patience, under pretence of reaping that of Correction? At least there ought to be a very great likelihood of success; if this be wanting, we act against Reason, by renouncing upon pretence of so uncertain a hope, the certain benefit which a peaceable and humble patience would bring.

VII.

As concerning Silence in general, we may say, that there ought to be motives for speaking, whereas none are requisite to hold ones tongue; that is, we have a sufficient obligation to Silence, when we are not engag'd to speak. Now with more reason may this Maxime be applyed to that Silence which stifles complaints; because, for these complaints our Motives ought to be strong and evident to an high degree; whereas to forbear complaining it suffices that we are not in an evident necessity to complain.

VIII.

What trespasses shall we forgive our Neighbours, if by our complaints we exact from them whatever they can owe us; and if we take revenge of them for the least faults they commit against us, by making all that we can pass Sentence of condemnation against them? With what Confi-

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fidence can we beg of God that he would forgive us our sins, if we pardon none of those we believe others have committed against us?

IX.

There is nothing more beneficial, than thus to suppress ones complaints and resentments. It is the best means to obtain at the Hands of Almighty God, that he will not deal with us according to the rigour of his Justice, nor enter into judgment with us, as the Scripture speaks. It is the assuredst ready way to quell dissensions in their birth, and to hinder their growing high. It is an act of Charity we practice towards our selves, whilst we reap the fruit of Patience; whilst we free our selves from the repute of being nice and quarrelsome, and from the trouble and vexation which we feel, when the address of Men to justify themselves makes the fault be plainly laid to our charge in matters wherein we thought we had the right. It is a deed of Charity we do others, in tolerating their weaknesses, and sparing them both the little confusion they have deserv'd, and the new faults they would perhaps commit in justifying themselves, and in laying new matter to their charge, to whom already they have given occasion
of

of complaint. In fine, for the most part 'tis the best means of making them our friends; the Example of our Patience being more powerful to change their Heart towards us, than our Complaints: For these at the most can but make them correct the exterior, a matter of small consequence: Whereas they rather increase that inward aversion, from whence proceed those things we make the subject of our Complaints.

X.

What would our loss be, should we resolve not to complain? Nothing at all; no not even in this World. Others will not speak worse of us for it: Nay, on the contrary, as soon as they shall be aware of our reservedness, they shall be less inclined to back-bite us: We shall not be worse dealt withall; we shall be more belov'd. The whole will be reduc'd to certain incivilities, and unjust discourtesies, for which we can find no redress in our complaints. Does this malignant satisfaction we take in communicating our disgusts to others by our complaints, deserve so much, as thereby to deprive us of those Treasures we might gain by our Patience and Humility?

XI.

The proper season of establishing our selves in this resolution is, when we chance to forget our selves in some complaints. Never better, than then can we discern the vanity, and the nothing of the content we sought for there. It is then we must say to our selves: Is it for this vain idle satisfaction that we have depriv'd our selves of the inestimable good of Patience, and of that recompence we might expect of it from God Almighty? In what stead have our complaints stood us, what profit have we reap'd thence? We have endeavoured to get those we have murmur'd against condemn'd by others; whereas perhaps they pass sentence only against us; but it is certain that God himself condemns us of malignity, of impatience, and of slighting things of another World. Before we murmur'd we had some advantage over those who had offended us; but by our complaints we have plac'd our selves under them, because we have reason to believe, that the sin we have committed against God, is far greater than all those faults Men can commit against us. Thus we have done our selves much more wrong, than we could receive from the petty injustices of Men; for these could but de-
prive

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prive us of some few things inconsiderable; whereas the injustice we do our selves by these impatient murmurs, deprive us of an Everlasting Happiness which is annexed to each good action. We have therefore infinitely more reason to complain of our selves, than of others.

XII.

These considerations may stand us in great stead to repress the desire we have of disburdening our Heart by our complaints, and to regulate us outwardly in our words: But it is impossible we should long continue in this restraint, if we give our resentments full scope to act within our breasts with all their vigour and violence. Exterior murmurs proceed from those within, and when the Heart is full of them, it is hard to hinder their bursting forth. They always scape-out, and make themselves a passage some way or other. Besides, the primary end of this exterior moderation being to procure interior Peace, it would profit little to appear outwardly patient and reserv'd, if within all be in tumult and disorder. We must therefore endeavour to stifle those murmurs which our Soul frames within it self, and whereof it alone is witness, as well as those that make a shew before Men.

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and the only way to do this, is to lay aside the love of whatsoever may excite them in us. For the truth is, we trouble not our selves to raise stirrs about things absolutely indifferent.

XIII.

Causes of complaints are infinite; for they are as many as the things we can settle our affections on, and in which Men can either hurt or displease us. We may nevertheless reduce them to some General Heads; as *Contempt, False Judgments, Backbiting, Aversion, Incivility, Indifference and Neglect, Reservedness, or want of Trust, Ingratitude, and Troublesome Humours.*

We are naturally averse from all these, because we affect their contraries, viz. Esteem and Love of others, their concerning themselves for our Affairs, Civility, Trust, Acknowledgements, and Humours that are sweet and easie. Thus to free our selves from the impressions these Objects of our hatred make on our minds, we must labour to root out the affections we have for their contraries. Nothing but Gods Grace can effect this. But, as Grace makes use of Humane means, it will not be unprofitable to store up such considerations as may discover to us the
vanity

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vanity of these Objects of our affection: And this is what we aim at in these following reflections.

XIV.

Nothing makes it appear more, how deep Man is plung'd in vanity, injustice, and error, than the complacence we take when we perceive others judge advantageously of, and have an esteem for us; because on one side, the remaining light we have, though dim, is not yet so in this particular, but lets us clearly see how vain, unjust, and ridiculous this passion is; and yet, on the other side, we cannot stifle it, how much soever convinc'd we be of its foolishness, but always feel it alive at the bottom of our Hearts. Nevertheless it is good often to give ear to what Reason says on this subject. If this be not able wholly to extinguish the unhappy bent we have, at least it will suffice to make us ashamed thereof, to breed confusion in us, and diminish its effects.

XV.

There are few so grossly vain, as to be taken with commendations manifestly false; and there is but a small share of Honesty and Candour required not to be pleas'd that the World should be wholly deceived in us; For Example, 'tis a gross
foolery,

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foolery, whereof few are capable, to desire to pass for skilful in some Language one has never learn'd, or to be esteem'd a great Mathematician, when perfectly ignorant of those Sciences. It would be a difficult matter not to be ashamed interiorly, and confounded for so sordid a vanity. Yet let the ground of this repute be never so little, we accept thereof with a complacency, convincing us much what of the same unworthiness, and insincere dealing.

XVI.

To paint you out in rude Colours this Humour: What would the World say of one, who, finding himself disfigured, and struck from head to foot with some loathsome uncurable disease, so that nothing remain'd sound but some one little part of his Face, and this so that he did not know whether even that were not corrupted within, should nevertheless expose it to view, hide all the rest, and with pleasure hear himself prais'd for the beauty of that small piece. Without question they would say, that so excessive a vanity bordered on madness. Yet this is the Pourtraiture of the vanity we are all guilty of; and which yet does not display all its deformities. We are full of faults, of sin,
of

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of corruption. What we have of good is almost nothing; and yet this small residue of good is often spoil'd and marr'd by a thousand by-aims and turns of self-love. Notwithstanding all this, if it chance that some, unaware of the greatest part of our defects, cast their Eye and Esteem on that small parcel of good which appears in us, and which perhaps is false and corrupt; this judgment, as blind and ill grounded as it is, ceases not to flatter and please us.

XVII.

I have told you, that this Pourtraiture does not display all its deformities; For if one, struck with so strange a disease, should take delight in the esteem others had for the beauty of that sound part, though he would be vain and ridiculous, yet would he not at least be blind, or ignorant of his own condition. But our vanity has blindness for its companion. Whilst we conceal our faults from others, we endeavour to hide them from our selves; and here it is we have the best success. We desire only to be seen and taken notice of by that small part which we imagine free from blemish, and it is only through it we look on our selves.

XVIII.

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XVIII.

What then is this repute wherewith we flatter our selves? It is a judgement grounded upon the knowledge of one small part, and the ignorance of all the rest. What is the complacence we take therein? 'Tis a prospect of our selves full of blindness, full of error, full of illusion, by which we consider and measure our selves by one small part, forgetting all the rest of our Miseries and Wounds.

XIX.

But in opinions thus favourable for us, what is there that can be so grateful, and can deserve so much of our affection? Let us put the question to our selves, or rather let us ask our own Experience. This will tell us, that nothing is more vain, nothing of shorter durance than this esteem. He who on some particular occasion may have prais'd and approv'd of us, will not be the less dispos'd to undervalue us on another. Often this very esteem will incline him thereunto; because it rather creates jealousy, than begets love. Having drawn from the mouth of others some vain and barren praises, they'l prefer before us the very lowest of Men, that shall be more for their interest. They will poison all the Testimonies they are forced to
give

give to what we have of good, by some malignant observation of our defects. They will set a value on what in us shall deserve none, and condemn what may deserve esteem. Ought we not certainly to have an extraordinary meanness of Soul, and strange littleness of mind to take delight in an Object so vain, and so contemptible?

XX.

But let us suppose this repute the best grounded, and the most sincere that we can imagine, or vanity it self desire: Let us heighten it by the quality of the persons that give it, by their wit, or whatsoever else can serve most to flatter, and please our inclinations to it. What is there of lovely or solid in all this, considered in it self only? It is the esteem some persons have of us, who suppose us Masters of certain good qualities, but who neither bestow any on us, nor augment those we have. It leaves us such as we were, and so is perfectly useless. It subsists not, but whilst they think of us; and it is seldom they do so. Some of those whose good opinion we are so pleas'd with, will scarce think on us twice a year, and when they do, their thoughts will be slight and few, forgetting us all the rest of the time.

XXI.

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XXI.

This Esteem is so frail a good, that a thousand accidents may rob us of it, without any fault of ours. A false rumour, an inadvertence, some little cross accident is able to blot it out, or at least render it of more harm than advantage. For when Esteem is joyn'd with Aversion, it only opens the Eyes to see faults, and the Heart to give a kind entertainment to whatsoever we shall hear against those we esteem and hate; because we have even this Esteem in Hatred, and we desire to be freed from it, as from a thing wherewith we find our selves burdened.

XXII.

If we do not perceive this Esteem to be in the Hearts of others, it is in respect of us, as if it were not: If we are aware that it is there, 'tis an object full of danger for us, and whose sight may take from us the small residue of Vertue we have. What kind of good therefore is that which is useless when we see it not; and does harm when seen, which has at once all these conditions of being vain and useless, frail and dangerous?

XXIII.

Did we not affect the approbation of others, we should not be touch'd with any

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any words they might speak to our disadvantage, since the greatest effect they could produce would be to deprive us of what we look'd on with indifferency. But since there are some who fancy, that though it be not lawful to desire and look after repute, yet we have reason to be offended when slighted and ill spoken of, it will not be amiss to examine what there is of real and solid in these Objects, which so violently stir up our passions.

XXIV.

To know therefore how unjust our nicety is in this particular, and that all the sentiments it excites in us are contrary to true Reason, proceeding not so much from the Objects themselves, as from the corruption of our own Hearts; we need but take notice, that these judgments, these discourses wherewith we are offended, may be of three sorts. For they are either absolutely true, or absolutely false; or partly true, and partly false. Now our resentment is equally unjust in all these three cases.

If these judgments be true, is it not horrible not to be troubled that our sins should be known by God, and yet not to suffer that they should be known by Men? Can we own more palpably, that we prefer
Men.

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Men before our Maker? Is it not the height of injustice, at once to acknowledge that our sins deserve an Eternity of Torments, and not with joy to accept so slight a punishment as that small confusion they bring upon us before Men?

The knowledge Men have of our faults and miseries increase them not; on the contrary, it might be able to diminish them, were it suffer'd with humility.

'Tis therefore a piece of visible folly, not to resent the real mischiefs we do to our selves, and to be so lively touch'd with those imaginary ones, which cannot but be beneficial to us. And this sensibility is an evident proof of our excessive blindness; which ought to inform us, that what others know, is but a small part of our many faults.

XXV.

If these judgments and discourses be false and ill ground'd, our resentment is little less unreasonable and unjust. For why should not the Judgment of God Almighty justifying us, suffice to make us contemn that of Men? Why should not it have the same influence on us, as the approbation of our friends and others whom we esteem, which for the most part is enough to comfort us, and counterpoise what

what others can either say or think against us? Why has not Reason it self, shewing, that such discourses cannot hurt us, that of themselves they can do no harm either to Soul or Body; nay, that they may be of great profit to us, so much power over our minds, as to make us surmount a passion so vain and unreasonable.

XXVI.

We grow not cholerick, when any imagine us to be in a Fever, when we are certain of our being well. Why therefore should we be offended at those who believe we have committed faults which we have not, or who condemn us of defects we are not guilty of? Since their judgment can less make us guilty of, or fasten to us those faults and defects, than the thought of a Man who believes we are in a Fever, can effectively make us sick of that distemper.

XXVII.

The reason of this is, some will say, because no body contemns and flights one in a Fever, it is an evil which does not make us contemptible in the Eyes of the World; so we are not offended by the judgment of those who think so. But he who lays to our charge Spiritual faults,
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generally joyns therewith contempt, and excites the same Idea and Sentiment in others.

This is really the true cause of this passion; but this cause does but give us a fuller knowledge of its injustice. For were we just to our selves, we should acknowledge without difficulty, that those who accuse us of faults we have not, do not lay to our charge a great number of others we effectively have: And thus we are gainers by all the judgments we complain of, though never so false. The judgments of others would be infinitely less favourable to us, were they absolutely conformable to Truth, or were all our real faults known to those who frame them. Wherefore if they do us some little wrong, in a thousand other matters they favour us, and we would not for a World they should deal with us according to the rules of exact justice.

But we are so unreasonable, and so unjust, that we would draw profit from the ignorance of others. We cannot endure they should take from us any thing we believe we have: And we would willingly keep up with them the reputation of many good qualities we have not. We complain if they think they see faults in us
which

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which are not there; and we reckon as nothing, if they spy not an infinite number of defects, which really we have: As if Good and Evil only consisted in the opinions of Men.

XXVIII.

If therefore we have no reason to complain, neither of true Judgments, nor even of false ones; we ought by consequence to be less troubled at those that are partly true, and partly false. In the mean time, by a partiality the most unjust that ever was, we are offended with what they have of false, but are not humbled by the Truths they contain. And whereas the sentiment we should have of what they contain of true, ought to stifle the resentment of what is false and unjust therein; on the contrary, we, by a vain resentment of some falsity and injustice there mingled, stifle that which we ought to have of what is real and solid.

XXIX.

I do not pretend that these considerations are sufficient to correct and free us from this injustice; but at least they may be able to convince us thereof, and it is something to be so convinc'd. For there is always to be found, in these inward grudgings and rancour which we feel, when such
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discourses and judgments pass on us, a forgetfulness of our sins and real miseries; since it is impossible, that those who acknowledge their true greatness, and are touch'd therewith as they ought, can busie themselves about the discourses and judgments of others. A Man deeply in debt, oppress'd with Suits at Law, with poverty and sickness, little regards what can be said of him: His real evils give him no time to think on the imaginary ones.

Thus the true cure of this tenderness, which makes us so sensible of what is said against us, is vigorously to apply ourselves to the consideration of our own Spiritual ills, of our own weakness, dangers, poverty, and of that Judgment God makes of us now, and will make known at the hour of our Death. Were these thoughts as lively, and as continual in our mind, as they ought to be; reflections on the Judgments of Men would find it a hard task to get entrance there; or at least to take it wholly up, and fill it with spite and bitterness, as often they do.

XXX.

For this end it will be profitable to compare the Judgments of Men with that
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of God, and to reflect on their different qualities. Mens Judgments are often false, unjust, dubious, rash, and always inconstant, and neither of profit or force. Whether they approve, or dislike us, they make no change in what we are, nor make us in effect either happier, or more miserable. But on that Judgment God will make of us, depends all our good, or all our misery. This Judgment is always just, always True, always Certain and Unchangeable, and its effects are for all Eternity. Can we therefore fancy a greater folly, than to busie ones mind with these Judgments of Men, which concern us so little, and forget that of God whence all our Happiness depends?

XXXI,

We pretend often to set a gloss on this inward spite, caus'd in us by these disadvantageous Judgments, with the pretext of Justice, fancying to our selves, that we are only concern'd because they are not equitable, and the Authors of them are in the wrong. But if this were true, we should be as much troubled at the unjust Judgments made against others, as at those against our selves: Which since we are not, 'tis grossly to flatter our selves, not to see that self-love is the cause of this dis-

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discontent we feel for what concerns us. It is not the injustice it self which offends us, 'tis our being the Object of it. Let another be the Object of it, our resentment will cool, and we shall content our selves only to disallow quietly, and without perturbation this self-same piece of injustice, which before put us into so great a heat.

XXXII.

Mean time, did we take juster measures, we should find, that these disadvantageous Judgments look not properly towards us, and that it is chance, not choice which determines them to have us for their Object. For it must needs be, that he who judges thus of us, has been struck with some appearances directing him thereunto: And though these Appearances were slight ones, (for we suppose the Judgments false) nevertheless it is true, that he who judges thus, had his mind dispos'd to frame such Judgments from such Appearances; so that they take their rise from these Appearances meeting with his evil disposition. The same effect would have been produc'd, had they been taken notice of in any other. Thus we ought to believe, that these Judgments look not particularly at us: We ought only to suppose, that these

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these people were dispos'd to judge ill of whomsoever should strike them with such and such Appearances. Chance has decreed, that we should be the Men. But this ill disposition, and this lightness of mind making these Rash Judgments, was of it self as indifferent whom they should wound, as a stone thrown in the Air, which hurts him on whom it falls, not by choice, or because he is such a Man, but because he chanc'd to be in the place where it was to fall.

XXXIII.

When we light into the hands of those Wretches, who in Woods and Forrests way-lay Passengers, and that we are ill handled, and rob'd by them, we take not this treatment for an affront. We express not our resentment against them so, because we know they do not pick and choose those they fall on, and that in general they are resolv'd to rob whomsoever they shall meet unable to resist them.

That disposition whence Rash Judgments spring, is all out as general and undetermin'd, and takes as little heed whom it lights on. It is a lightness of mind, making certain people let themselves be carried by slight appearances. When therefore we furnish these appearances, and

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this light disposition has its effect against us, we have no more reason to be mov'd with that resentment which is called spight or vexation, than we should have to entertain the like against those Thieves who should set upon us, because we were in their way.

XXXIV.

There is moreover something ridiculously exotick in the trouble we conceive for the disadvantageous judgments and discourses the World makes of us. For one must be little acquainted with it, not to be perswaded, that 'tis impossible it should be otherwise. Princes are ill spoken of in their Anti-Chambers. Their Domesticks counterfeit them. Friends talk of one anothers faults, and look upon it as a piece of honesty and candour sincerely to own them. However it be, this is certain, that the World is in possession of the privilege of speaking freely of the defects of others in their absence. Some do this out of malice, others with good intentions; but very few are free from it. It is therefore ridiculous to expect to be the only person that the World will spare; and if such discourses and judgments will put us out of humour, we shall never be pleas'd. For there is no time

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time wherein, in general we may not assure our selves, that they do speak; or have spoken of us otherwise than we could have wish'd. But because to be constantly out of the humour, would be too troublesome, we are pleas'd to spare our selves without reason, and to expect being so, till some either tell us what is said, or shew us those who do speak ill of us: In the mean time, this telling adds almost nothing, and before that, we ought to be much what as certain, that we and our faults were the subject of others discourses, as if we had been told of it already. This little degree of assurance produc'd by advertisement, is really very inconsiderable to be able to change, as it does, the state of our Souls.

Thus let us as we please consider this touchy humour shewing it self on these occasions, and we shall find it always unjust, and always contrary to reason.

XXXV.

When we desire to be belov'd, or are troubled that we are hated by others, because thereby our designs are either further'd or hinder'd, it is not properly vanity or spight; it is hope or fear. And this is not what we here reflect on, where we only examine the impression which the

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sentiments of others love or hatred for us, may of themselves make in our Hearts; the sight alone of these Objects being but too capable either to please or vex us, without considering their consequences. For as the esteem we have for our selves, is always accompanied with a tender and sensible love; so we desire not only that Men should give us their approbation, but settle their love on us; and the esteem they have for us, brings no satisfaction with it, if it ends not in affection. Wherefore nothing shocks us more than aversion and hatred, nothing excites in us more lively resentments: And these are, since original sin, become natural to us, yet cease they not to be unjust, nor are we less oblig'd to withstand and fight against them; and this we may do by some reflections little differing from those we have already propos'd against the love of Honour and Esteem.

XXXVI.

To seek after the affection and love of others is unjust; since it is built on the opinion of our selves, as deserving to be lov'd, whereas it is false that we deserve to be so. It springs from blindness, and a wilful ignorance of our defects. One overwhelm'd with misery, and poor, would
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be pleas'd that others suffer'd, and were charitable towards him. We should crave no more, did we perfectly know our condition; and this we should know, did we not wilfully put out our own Eyes.

XXXVII.

Can he who knows that he deserves that the whole Creation should rise up and war against him, pretend that the self-same Creatures should love him? Thus instead of looking on the love of others as our due, and their aversion as unjust, we ought on the contrary to consider their hatred as what we deserve, and their affection as a favour we deserve not.

XXXVIII.

But if it be a piece of injustice, generally, to believe ones self worthy of love, it is yet a much more greater to desire to be belov'd by force. There is nothing more free than love, and we ought not to pretend to purchase it by complaints and reproaches. Perhaps 'tis our faults we are not belov'd, perhaps also the reason is to be sought for in the evil dispositions of others: But it is certain, that violence and anger are not the means to obtain it.

XXXIX.

The origine of all aversions is the contrariety which happens to be betwixt the

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disposition we find our selves in, and that we think we see of others disposition. Now this disposition makes us act against all those in whom this contrariety appears. When therefore it happens that we either really have those qualities, which to some are the object of aversion, or that we make our selves known unto them, only by such particularities, as give them reason to imagine we have them; it ought not seem strange to us, that their disposition should produce its natural effects against us; it would have done the same against any other whatsoever, and it is not particularly we whom they hate, 'tis him in general who has such and such offensive qualities.

XL.

In general, we have an aversion for those that are covetous, self-interested, and presumptuous; we in particular are believ'd guilty of these faults: This general aversion therefore acts against us. What is it that offends us herein? Is it this general aversion? No, this aversion in some sort is just and reasonable; for one thus qualified, deserves we should have some kind of aversion for him. Is it the judgment they make of us? But this judgment is form'd upon some appearances, which

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which may really be slight, but for all that are strong enough to carry it with those who see them. We ought therefore to make their weakness and lightness the subject of our complaints, not their injustice.

XLI.

When others love, it is not properly us they love, their affection being only bottom'd on their ascribing to us qualities we have not, or on their not seeing the defects we really have. The same happens when they hate us. Then the good we have appears not to them, and they see only what's ill in us. Now we are neither the Man who is without fault, nor the Man in whom there is no good. It is not therefore so much us, as a certain Phantasm set up by themselves which they love or hate: And thus we are to blame to be pleas'd with their affection, or offended with their hatred.

XLII.

But should this love or hatred reflect on us directly as we truly are, what good or what evil would thence come to us, if we consider, as we have said, these sentiments in themselves? They are but fleeting vapours, which of their own accord vanish in a moment; it being impossible,

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that Man should fix himself for any time to one object. Yet should they continue, they would have no power, of themselves, to render us either more happy or unhappy. They are things intirely seperated from us, having no effect on us, unless our Souls joyn with them, and by a false and deceitful imagination take them for real goods or real evils. Let us unite in one the love of all the Creatures, let us heighten it to be the most violent, and most endearing that we can possibly fancy, yet will not all this add the least degree of happiness either to our Souls, or to our Bodies; and if our Souls take any pleasure in it, so far will they be from becoming better, that they will grow worse by the vanity they'l fall into. Likewise, let us joyn in one the hatred of all Mankind against us, yet cannot this lessen the least of our real goods, which are those of the Soul. Ought not this only consideration, of the impotency of the love of great ones, either to hurt or help us, suffice to make us regard them with indifference?

XLIII.

What liberty would not that man enjoy, who cared not to be lov'd, nor fear'd to be hated, and yet at the same time upon
other

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other motives should do all that was necessary to gain the one, and shun the other? Who should endeavour to be serviceable to others, without expecting any reward, no not that of their good will; and who should comply with all his obligations towards them, without dependance on their disposition towards himself? Who should not in the good offices he does them look on any Object but what is fix'd and permanent, viz. his obedience to God, without any regard to Creatures, which cannot but lessen the recompence he expects at his hands?

Who could hate a Man thus dispos'd, nay who could abstain from loving of him? It would fall out, then, that by not fearing, he would avoid the hatred of Men, and gain their affection, without searching after it: Whereas those, who by a passionate desire of being belov'd, become so sensible of aversion, for the most part do involve themselves in it, by so uneasy a tenderness.

XLIV.

Yet is there something more unreasonable, when we are offended that others carry themselves with indifference towards us. For were it at our choice to give them what sentiments we pleased, it should be

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that properly, which our true interest ought to make us choose. Their love is full of danger, drawing our Hearts away, and poisoning them with a mortal sweetness. Their hatred exasperates us, and makes us run the hazard of losing Charity: But this indifferency is a mean proportion'd to our condition and weakness, and which leaves us the liberty of pursuing our journey towards God, without turning out of the road to his Creatures.

XLV.

All affection of others towards us, is a certainty and engagement; not only because concupiscence makes us cleave to it, and we are afraid to lose it; but also because hence springs a necessity of certain devoirs, which we cannot acquit our selves of without difficulty. As it lays their Hearts open to us, so it obliges us to make use of this openness for their Spiritual good; and 'tis not easie to do so. It is true, this is a great good, when we can manage it well, yet it is not to be covered, being accompanied with so many dangers. We ordinarily stop at this affection, we take content in it, and are afraid to lose it; and are so far from taking hence an occasion of conducting others towards God, that it is often a cause
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of diverting our selves from him, and of softning us, by drawing us into their passions.

XLVI.

But, some will say, why does such a one behave himself with that indifferency towards me, since I am otherwise affected towards him? Why has he no concern for what touches me, who interests my self with so much care with what relates to him? These are the discourses which self-love makes in the Breast of touchy people, endowed with small Vertue; but it is easie to discover their injustice.

If the sole aim we drove at in being complacent to others, was to tye them to us, and cause them to repay us in the same coin, we well deserv'd to lose so vain a reward.

But if we had other designs, if we apply'd our selves to Men only in obedience to God, does not this application carry with it its own recompence, and can we exact any other without manifest injustice?

It is true, others may be faulty in their neglect and indifferency towards us; but this fault concerns God, not us. It does harm to them, but none to us. It may give us occasion to pity, but not to complain.

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plain of them. And thus the resentment it leaves in us is always unjust, since it hath no other Object than our selves.

XLVII.

Nothing doth manifest more how much Faith is extinguisht, and how unactive in Christians it is, than the displeasure they conceive when others pay them not all the acknowledgement that's due to them; because nothing is more opposed to the light of Faith.

Did they look on, as they ought, the services they do others, they would consider them as favours they have received from God, and which they owe to his goodness, and as works which they ought to consecrate and offer up to him, without the least regard to Creatures.

They would consider those to whom these good Offices were done, as persons who in some sort have procured them this favour; and consequently they believe they have received much more from, than they have bestowed on them.

They would dread as the greatest of misfortunes to receive in this world the recompence of these good deeds, and to be deprived of that which they might have had in the other, had they done them purely for the love of God.

They

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They would acknowledge, that these deeds, such as they are, were mixt with many imperfections: And so they should have reason to take thence occasion of humbling, and desiring to purge themselves by Penance for them.

To go about to ally with these sentiments which Faith ought to give us, that spight and ill humour we experience, when others are wanting in what we think they owe us. Is it not, on the contrary, to let the World know, that we have taken all these pains for Men, that we only had regard to them; and that so the Works we glory in, are purloyn'd from God Almighty, who has therefore right to chastise us for them?

XLVIII.

If we have had only Men in our Eye, in all the good Offices we have done them, it is well for us they should be ungrateful, and not acknowledge them; because their ingratitude may be useful for us to obtain Gods Mercy, if we bear it as we ought. If we have had God only in sight, it still turns to our advantage that Men did not reward us; because the consideration we should have of their acknowledgement, is above any thing else capable of diminishing, and bringing to nothing the recompense.

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pense we expect from God. Which way soever we consider then, the gratitude of Men, we shall find, that if it prove beneficial to them, it will prove otherwise to us: And that in their ingratitude we may find infinite more advantages. Their gratitude can only take from us the fruit of our best actions, and augment the punishment due for our ill: Their ingratitude may preserve for us the fruit of our good deeds, and help us to pay the debt we owe Gods Justice for our bad ones.

XLIX.

We should never be so injurious to a Prince, who had promis'd large recompenses to those who should serve him, and would be grievously offended, should they look for them any where but from himself; as to prefer the caresses of some few of his Subjects before the solid benefits they might hope from him. Yet thus we daily deal with God Almighty. He promises an Everlasting Kingdom to the Charitable Services we do our Neighbour; he bids us be content with this reward, and expect no other. In the mean time, the most part of Men busie themselves in examining whether others pay them what they owe them, whether those they have
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been serviceable to own their obligations, and whether they acquit themselves punctually of those devoirs Men have established for marks of acknowledgement.

L.

If therefore we had the true sentiments which Faith ought to inspire, we should be fully perswaded, that as God does us a great favour, when he furnishes us with means of helping others; so he does us another no whit less, when he permits them not to testify the acknowledgement they ought. For this is to take order in giving us an inestimable Treasure, that it shall continue to us, and no body ravish it from us.

LI,

But, our Joy ought to be full and compleat, when we have reason to think, that those who seem to be wanting in their due acknowledgements to us, are of themselves very grateful, and that their faults come from their not knowing the obligation they have to us. For though it be always a real advantage to us, that others are wanting in point of gratitude towards us; yet ought we not to wish for this, since for the most part it is ill for them. But there's nothing but what's desirable; then what happens is neither ill to them,

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nor prejudicial to us; and when they, without guilt of ingratitude, put us out of danger of losing for an humane acknowledgement the reward which we expect from God.

LII.

There is not only in this expectation of acknowledgement from others much injustice, but also a great meanness, and it ought to cause in us a great confusion, when we consider for what trifles we lose an Eternal Reward, All we expect in an acknowledgement, often is reduced to a bare complement, or to some useless civilities; and these are the things we prefer before God, and rewards he promises us.

LIII.

Nay, often we our selves are the cause of what we impute to others, by way and manner of serving them, we stifle the gratitude in their Hearts, and we have almost always reason to believe, that when we perceive less acknowledgement return'd to us, than to others, there is in us something which hinders it. But whether it happen by our fault, or that of others, it is always a weakness in us to be concern'd and vex'd when that return is not made, which we clearly see cannot but prove dangerous for us.

LIV.

LIV.

The trust and confidence others put in us, is a mark of their friendship and esteem, and so no wonder if it please and flatter self-love; nor is it a wonder if the reservedness of those we believe ought to have these sentiments for us, be uneasie, and wound the same. But Reason and Faith ought to instill into us quite contrary Principles, and raise in us a strong persuasion, that this reservedness of others towards us, is of far more advantage than their confidence and trust.

LV.

Were there no other reason for this, than that it is beneficial to want those petty satisfactions which please and foster up our vanity; this ought to suffice to make us with Joy to lay hold on these occasions of a Spiritual Mortification, which might be so much the more advantageous to us, as it directly opposes the first principal of our passions. But there are others as solid and important as this: And here I give you some of them.

LVI.

He who opens himself to us, in some sort consults us, and after this we cannot discourse with him without concerning our selves in his Conduct and Affairs; since

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it is almost impossible but that what we shall say to him, will have some relation to what he has discovered to us, and we cannot but thereby make some impression on his mind: because even by his open-breastedness he is dispos'd to hearken to, and credit us. Now it is no small danger to lie under an obligation of speaking in these circumstances; because a great deal of light and knowledge is required to do it with profit, either for ourselves or others. It often happens, that we only authorize their passions; since we are naturally inclin'd not to contristate them: And thus we bolster up that secret desire they have to find those who shall approve of their proceedings, which usually is the cause of their discovering themselves.

LVII.

There are few who can receive the full effusion of the Heart and Spirit of others, without being partakers of their corruption and faults. We insensibly participate of their passions, we entertain prejudices against such as they dislike, and as the trust they put in us makes us believe that they have no mind to deceive us, we espouse their opinions and sentiments, without being aware that they often deceive themselves first. And thus we fill

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fill our selves with all their false impressions.

LVIII.

We often by this means charge our selves with several things which ought to be kept secret; a burden not at all easie to carry; since by it we are oblig'd to a very troublesome circumspection, lest we be surpriz'd; and since it puts us in great danger of wounding Truth. And as it often happens, that these secrets come several ways to be known, naturally the suspicion of divulging them falls on those to whom they have been thus with confidence entrusted.

LIX.

We contract too by this confidence and openness of others to us, a kind of obligation to trust, and make them partakers of our secrets; because they take offence, if they be not dealt with, as they deal with us; whereas those who are more reserv'd, take it not ill we should be so also to them. Now this obligation is not often without great inconveniences; since we cannot be wanting therein without giving disgust, nor comply with it, without incurring the danger of doing either them or our selves harm, by the ill use they may make of what we disclose to them.

LX.

If we consider further how little of reality, and how much of vanity there is in the pleasure we take when others trust us, how unjust it is to exact of others what ought to be so free as is the disclosing of their secrets; and lastly, if we do ourselves that right as to acknowledge, that if others are reserv'd towards us, it is because something in us makes them so; It will be a matter of some difficulty not to pass sentence against that inward displeasure the secrecy of others causes, and not to be asham'd of our own weakness.

LXI.

Civility and courteous behaviour gains our Hearts; Incivility offends us: But the one gains, the other offends; because we are Men, that is, because we are full of vanity and injustice.

There are very few civilities which ought to please us, even according to humane reason; because there are very few which are sincere and disinterested. They are often but a play and sport of words, and an exercise of vanity, where nothing of real or true is to be found. To be pleas'd with this, is to take content in being cheated. For, those who in outward appearance are the most courteous
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and complemental, perhaps will be the first who will laugh at us when our backs are turn'd.

LXII.

Even that civility which hath most of sincerity and truth, hath always little of profit, and sometimes much of danger. It is but a Testimony that they love and esteem us; and so sets before our Eyes two Objects flattering self-love in us, and of which each is able to corrupt our Heart.

LXIII.

All the civilities we receive, engage us to troublesome servitudes. For the World gives not any thing *gratis*. Here is driven a kind of commerce and traffick, where self-love sits as Judge, and this Judge obliges us to a reciprocal equality of returns, and authorizes those complaints which are made against such as are defective therein.

LXIV.

Civilities for the most part corrupt our Judgments, because they often incline us to prefer those from whom we receive them, before others endowed with the essential qualities which deserve our esteem,

LXV.

LXV.

As we reap little benefits from the civilities which are shewn us ; so incivility does us little harm ; and consequently 'tis an extream weakness to be offended thereat. Often 'tis only a want of taking notice of us, proceeding from their minds being employ'd about things of greater concern ; and those who are the least exact in civilities, are often the persons who have the most real and affective desires of doing us service in things of importance.

LXVI.

But let incivility come from indifferency or want of affection what good does it bereave us of ? What harm does it do us ? And how can we hope that God should forgive us the infinite debts we owe him by the indispensable Laws of his Eternal Justice, if we do not remit to Men the small deferences they owe us only on the score of humane agreements ?

LXVII.

Not but that God sets the Seal of his Authority on these agreements, and so we ought to shew these devoirs of civility one to another, even according to the Laws of God ; as has been shewn in the first part of this Treatise. But they are certain
debts

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debts which we never ought to exact or sue for; for they are not due to our deserts, but to our weakness. And as we ought not to be weak and infirm, and that it is by our own fault we are so, our first duty consists in correcting this weakness of ours, and we never have any right to complain that others have no regard thereof, and less yet to desire what only contributes towards the nourishing of it.

LXVIII.

Yet is it not enough to conserve Peace with ones self and others, not to offend any, or not to exact from others either friendship or esteem, confidence, gratitude or civility; farther, we must have a Patience not to be overcome by any capricious humour. For as it is impossible to make all those with whom we live, become just, moderate, and faultless; so ought we despair of preserving the tranquillity of our Soul, if we make it depend on these means.

LXIX.

We ought therefore to expect while we live amongst Men to find troublesome and uneasie humours, to meet with those who will grow angry for nothing, who will look awry on all things, who will dis-

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discourse without reason, and whose predominant humour shall be either fierce, or meanly and ungratefully complacent. Some will be too passionate, others too cold. Some will contradict you without reason, others will not endure to be contradicted in the least. Some will be envious and malicious, others insolent, too full of themselves, and without any respect for their Neighbours. We shall meet with those who shall believe all is due to them, and who never making reflections on the manner wherewith they treat others, shall nevertheless exact from them great and excessive deferences.

What hopes of living in repose if these faults shake us, if they vex and discompose us, and bereave our Soul of its quiet and calm temper?

We ought then to suffer them with patience, and not to be vex'd at them; if we desire to possess our own Souls, as the Scripture speaks, and prevent impatiences, every moment carrying us from our selves, and throwing us headlong into all the inconveniences we have display'd. But this Patience is not a common ordinary Vertue. So that it is very strange, that being on one side so difficult, on the other so necessary, we have no greater care to

to make it our practice, whilst at the same time we study, and employ our selves about so many useless and trifling things.

LXX.

To lessen the second impressions other peoples faults make upon us, it will be useful often to consider,

1. That these faults being so common as they are, it is a folly to be surpriz'd thereat, and not to expect to find them. In Man there is a medley of good and bad qualities: He is at once beneficial to us, and hurtful. As such we ought to consider him; and whosoever desires to reap the advantages of Humane Society, ought with patience to suffer the inconveniences that come along with it.

2. That there is nothing more ridiculous than to be unreasonable, because others are so, to do our selves harm, because another hurts himself, and to share and become guilty of other Mens follies; as if our own faults and miseries were not enough, without we add thereunto the load of all those of our Neighbours.

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3. That let the faults of others be never so great, they only do harm to those who have them, without the least inconvenience to us, provided we do not wilfully receive their impressiion. They are therefore objects of our pity, not of our anger; and we have as little reason to be vex'd at the diseases of mind in others, as we have to be angry at those which seize on their Bodies. Nay there is this difference, that we may against our Wills contract the distempers of their Bodies; whereas nothing but our own Wills can admit into our Souls the diseases of their minds.

LXXI.

We ought not only to look on the faults of others as diseases, but as diseases common to our selves: For we are as lyable thereunto as they. There are no faults we are not capable of, and if there be some we *de facto* have not, perhaps we have greater. Thus having no cause to prefer our selves before others, we shall find, that we have none to be offended at what they do; and that if we tolerate them, they in their turns must bear with us.

LXXII.

LXXII.

Other Mens faults, could we view them with a calm and charitable Eye, would be instructions to us so much the more profitable, as we should better perceive their deformity than that of our own, over part of which self-love casts a cloud. They might make us observe, that passions ordinarily have effects opposite to what we aim at: We grow angry to make our selves be believ'd, and this makes us be believ'd less. We take it ill we are not so much esteem'd, as we imagine we deserve; and we are esteem'd so much less, the more we hunt after it. We are offended because we are not belov'd; and by being so, we strein others, and draw more their aversion.

We might also hereby see with wonder to what degree these same passions blind those they are Masters of: For these effects so visible to others, are usually unknown to them. And it often happens, that whilst they make themselves odious, uneasie, and ridiculous to all the World, themselves are the sole persons who perceive nothing of it.

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And, all this might bring into our minds either the faults we have at other times committed through the like passions, or those we yet commit, lead by other passions perhaps not less dangerous, and in which we are full as blind. And thus our whole industry being apply'd to the redress of our own faults, we should become much more dispos'd to tolerate those of others.

LXXIII.

Lastly, we ought to consider, that it is as ridiculous to be angry at the faults and exotick humours of others, as it is to grow cholerick because the weather is not fair, or that it is too cold or hot; since our anger has as little influence on Men to correct their humours, as on the seasons to change the weather. There is only this difference, that the seasons neither grow better nor worse for our anger, whereas that we conceive against Men, stirs up their indignation against us, and gives life and activity to their passions.

LXXIV.

What hitherto has been laid before our Eyes, may suffice to give us a slight Idea
of

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of the means which may conduce towards the conserving of Peace amongst Men; and they are all comprehended in this Verse of the Psalm; *Pax multa diligentibus legem tuam, & non est illis scandalum.* For if we lov'd only the Law of God; we should be circumspect not to offend our Brethren; we should never irritate them by indiscreet strifes: Their faults would never be to us an occasion of anger, of rancour, of trouble, or of scandal: Since these faults hinder not us from remaining fix'd to this Law, since it obliges us to suffer them with patience, and since in particular it is this precept of Christian Patience, which the Apostle calls the Law of JESUS CHRIST: *Bear one anothers Burdens,* says he, *and so you shall observe the Law of CHRIST.* We ought therefore to acknowledge, that all our impatiences, all our vexations fall on us, because we do not love as we ought this Law of Charity; because we have other inclinations than that of obeying God; and because we seek after our glory, our pleasure, our satisfaction in Creatures. Wherefore the principal means to establish the Soul in a solid and unalterable Peace, is to fix it firm in that love which regards God only in all things;
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and which only covets to please him,
and place all its happiness in obeying
his Laws.

The End of the Fourth Treatise.



The Fifth Treatise.

Of Rash Judgements.

*Nolite ante tempus judicare quoadusq;
veniat Dominus.*

RASH Judgments being always attended by ignorance, and want of knowledge, imply a manifest Injustice; and a presumptuous usurpation of Gods Authority: For it only belongs to Truth to judge, according to what our Saviour says in the Gospel: *The Father hath given all Judgment to his Son, because he is Truth it self;* so that Men cannot take on them to judge, but at the Son gives them a right thereunto, by enlightning them by his Truth; and to undertake to judge without knowing, is to invert Gods order, to usurp unjustly the function of JESUS CHRIST,

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and exercise it in a manner essentially contrary to his Eternal Law : Since Christ himself is not the Judge of Men, but because as God he is Truth, and as Man he was replenished with Grace and Truth.

II.

Thus Rash Judgments are of the number of those actions which are essentially ill, and which cannot become warrantable by any circumstances whatsoever, since they are directly opposite to God's Eternal Justice. Yet may this sin be capable of different degrees, of being sometimes greater, sometimes less, according to the quality of its object, the causes whence it springs, and the effects it may produce.

III.

The quality of the object augments or diminishes it; since the more important things are, the greater is our obligation of being reserv'd and circumspect in judging thereof; and that our guilt is the greater when the Judgments we frame are Rash.

IV.

The causes also whence they spring make them more or less criminal, because the ignorance which is their inseparable companion is more or less so, according to the causes thereof, which may be very different

ferent. Sometimes our ignorance springs from a simple precipitation, making us take that for certain, which is not so: sometimes, from over-weening affection to our own sentiments, hindring us from examining them with that care which is necessary for discerning truth from error: But the commonest cause of this ignorance, which is alwayes to be found with rash judgments, is a certain malignity and particular aversion we have for those we thus rashly judge of.

V.

For it is this disposition which makes us discover in them blemishes and faults, which a simple eye would not find there.

It is this disposition which carries our mind to consider whatsoever may induce us to judge disadvantageously of them, and diverts it from taking notice of what might make our judgments favourable: This is it which lets out in lively colours the least conjectures, and makes the slightest appearances seem big in our eyes; this makes us guess at their most hidden thoughts, and dive to the very bottom of their hearts. We think them guilty because we desire they should be so; and whatever tends towards raising that persuasion in us, pleases and with ease enters

and takes possession of our minds. Now who can doubt but that so corrupt, so filthy a spring head must needs sully and poison whatsoever comes thence, and render both our ignorance, and the judgments it produces much worse and more displeasing to God, then if they came from some other inciple.

VI.

But what makes yet a greater difference amongst judgments, is that some are follow'd by great and dreadful consequences: For those hatreds and divisions which disturb humane Society, and extinguishes charity, are for the most part but the effects of some indiscreet words which slip from us unawares; and these words proceed from rash judgments, which formerly we had made within our selves. First we judge rashly of our neighbour, which of it self is a great evil; then by communicating our thoughts which is natural to us, we talk rashly; and these words passing afterwards from one to another, by an unhappy progress many minds come to be corrupted; so that perhaps one rash judgment may be the first cause of damning several souls.

VII.

It is further observable that we stop
not.

not for the most part, at simple judgments: We proceed from the thoughts of the mind, to the motions of the heart: We conceive an aversion and contempt for those we have slightly condemn'd, and inspire the same sentiments to others: sometimes we proceed so far as to extinguish in them and our selves that charity which is the life of our souls.

VIII.

But this is not all yet, we do not only hereby hurt those who joyn in and approve of our sentiments: We often do greater harm to such as dislike them when they are concerned therein. For when they come to the knowledge of these judgments, they are exasperated at our injustice, and conceive a violent hatred against those who approve of them.

IX.

Rash judgments are the source whence comes what we call Prevention or prejudice; or rather these are but rash judgments which we frame of the mind, dispositions and intentions of others, wherewith we permit our selves to be strongly prepossessed. For whereas there is no Painter that would undertake to draw the Pourtraiture of a face, upon some slight description made thereof by the By; we often

often frame to our selves pictures of others, from some inconsiderate discourse we may have heard, or some light action we may have seen. And having once conceived these impressions, we afterwards add thereunto all their other actions, and this Idea serves us instead of another key to unriddle all the rest of their life, and of a rule for our behaviour towards them. Thus having first judg'd amiss, our comportment towards them becomes so too, and we treat them in such a manner as lets 'em understand our prejudices against them, and so creates in them an aversion for us.

X.

These prejudices are the causes of great disorders every where, but of all others, Monasteries are the places where they are the most evident and sensible. For as the persons retir'd thither, are seperated from the greatest part of worldly objects, so they busy themselves with more application then others about that small number of things which are present to them; they are much more sensible of the disadvantageous judgments those of their community make of them, because being less distracted and divided, the residue of self-love in them unites its strength against
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that object which offends them. Hence it often happens, that words, with which men of the world would be little concern'd, entirely takes up the thoughts and sensibly afflicts those who are retir'd from it. A religious woman who believes that her superiour has a prejudice against her, is often more concerned thereat; then Courtiers, are who believe their Prince is prejudiced against them.

This in all religious Societies is one of the greatest troubles and tentations, and against which they ought by continual prayer and meditation to fortifie themselves. For if they are so sensibly toucht, when they seey others have a prejudice against them; and that turns their spirit, and dejects them: often they run a great hazard even in these Sanctuaries and places of refuge, whither they retire to shun the dangers of the world: Because it is a matter of great difficulty to avoid these inconveniences, and it is even so ordinary for virtuous persons to take up prejudices, that we ought not to expect they will have none against us: So that it is much better to expect, and to prepare ones self to suffer and bear with such prejudices.

XI.

But although those are very faulty, who are too much shaken by the imagination that others are prejudiced against them; yet is their fault greater who effectually entertain these prejudices, since not only their own sin, but that of others will be laid to their charge, and that thereby they give occasion of the great disorders, particularly in Religious houses. For often cold essays there beget aversion, aversion begets cabals; and these end in divisions, whereby all things are turned topsy turvy.

XII.

Can we be apprehensive enough of a sin causing so strange disorders? Is there any who has not reason to fear that God will at the hour of his death impute to him that unhappy train of crimes which shall only be the effects of the rash judgements he has made? And yet the truth is, there are few sins we are less apprehensive of than this. Every one acts as if he were infallible, and out of danger of being prejudiced or deceived: And at the same time that we acknowledge how common this fault is, and very often accuse others of it; we imagine ourselves almost alwayes exempt from it. The reason is, because it is almost alwayes as much hid from those who

who commit this fault against others, as it is visible to them that others fall into it against them; for self-love equally produces these two effects, to conceal this in our selves, and make it appear in others. Thus as discourses made in general gives concupiscence little offence, because it finds it self unconcerned therein, so do they stand us in little stead, because we alwayes apply them to others rather then to our selves.

XIII.

The way we take to conceal from our selves this fault, is a refined one hard to be shun'd: For it comes from the ill-use of a maxime true in it self, when taken in general, but which in particular we abuse inperceptibly. This maxime is that we are forbid to judge, but not to see, that is, to yield to evidence. Thus taking our judgements for things evident and seen, we fancy them safe from all that is said against the rashness of judgements. We never judge, we alwayes see; all our imaginations are evident truthes, and thus we stifle all the reproaches our consciences can upbraide us with.

XIV.

But if self-love did not blind us, it would be an easy matter to make us justly dis-

diffident of this pretended evidence. For there would need no more, but to oblige us to reflect on those we think guilty of rashness in the judgements they frame of us, and to make us in them observe all those very dispositions whereon we ground the pretence of our justification. They as well as we take their rashest judgements for most evident truths: Who then will assure us that we do not so too, and that we are the only ones exempt from this common illusion.

XV.

That just fear we ought to have least, we as well as others should be deceived; obliges us then, to take our selves that advice we would give to such as suffer themselves to run into rash judgements under pretence that it is lawful, to see, though it be not to judge. To such without doubt we should say, that since there is a multitude of people who are deceived in imagining they judge not, but only see, what's before their eyes; Christian prudence commands us even to shun these sights, when they are not necessary, because it forbids us rashly to expose our selves to danger. He that thinks he sees, may be deceived, in taking that for sight, and evident which in effect is only rash
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judgement. But he who sees not, nor gives his mind to see, is not deceived, because he judges not at all: We ought therefore to take this course as often as we are not obliged to see.

XVI.

Some without question will say, that it is not in our power whether we see or no: This being a necessary consequence of our understandings, and which often makes such lively impressions there, that it is impossible to resist them. But this is not generally true, or rather it is seldom so; because there are but few objects that strike the understanding so vehemently as to force it to yield and proceed to judgement: On the contrary, 'tis for the most part requir'd that we apply our selves to consider things; and 'tis this voluntary applying our selves to consider the faults of others, which Christian prudence ought to retrench in such as are not obliged by their place to be watchful to correct others.

XVII.

Whoever shall be careful: not to let his mind run after these useless reflections on the actions of others, shall very rarely find himself in a condition not to be able to abstain from judging of them. For there
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are some geueal reasons which incline us to doubt of what we have not examined with care. And as it is a sufficient answer to those who ask our advice, to tell them we have not as yet thought on what they demanded; so it is no less reasonable to tell our selves the same, and to suspend our judgment on this general consideration, that we ought not to judge till we have weighed all circumstances, and that as yet we have not done so.

We may therefore already convince them of a great fault; who defend themselves by this pretended maxime, that it is lawful to see, though it be not to judge; by shewing them that they have been rash and timerarius in applying themselves to consider what they pretend to see in others; and that the charity they owe to themselves; oblidged them to divert their sight, to the end they might suspend their judgment.

XVIII.

But there remains yet another duty more certain and more palpable, which cuts off a great share of those evils, which are caus'd by rash judgments; and 'tis this: Let the evidence we think we have of our Neighbours faults be never so great; yet Christian prudence forbids us to discover them

them to others, when we are not thereunto engaged by our place, nor oblig'd by any certain benefit. By this means, though we had judg'd rashly of them, yet should we be only accountable for our rashness, without becoming guilty of the bad effects it may produce in others.

XIX.

This practice is not only useful to regulate our words, and cut off the ill consequences of Rash Judgments; but infinitely more to regulate the Soul it self, and so correct the temerity of these Judgments in their very source. For we scarce ever give liberty to our understanding to judge of the faults of others, but to talk of them; and if we made them not the subject of our discourse, we should insensibly cease to reflect and judge thereof. Moreover, by speaking we become interested and engaged to maintain what we have said; and so less susceptible of whatsoever may serve to undeceive us.

XX.

But as there are some occurrences wherein it is impossible not to reflect on such faults as are fully expos'd to sight, others wherein it is difficult not to speak thereof; and there are even some who are oblig'd by the duty of their place to do
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both the one and the other : We must yet search for other remedies against the danger of Rash Judgments.

The most useful without doubt will be those which we shall apply to the original causes thereof, the principal of which are, as we have said, malignity, precipitation, and an over-weening affection to our own sentiments.

XXI.

Malignity is cur'd by filling the Heart with Charity, and drawing it down from Heaven by the means which the Holy Scripture discovers to us. It is cur'd by often reflecting on the Vertues and good qualities of others ; by turning our Eyes from their faules, and by reflecting much on our selves, and our own miseries:

XXII.

Precipitation or over-forwardness is cur'd by accustoming our selves to a slower pace in our Judgments, and to take more time to consider circumstances, being perswaded that what is true to day, will be as much so to morrow ; and that thus there will be no harm in taking more time to consider ; by stopping and moderating the impetuosity of ones Spirit, and the lightness of ones Tongue, even in things evident, that thereby we may innure them
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not to run headlong in things doubtful and obscure.

XXIII.

That over-weening affection to our own sentiments, is cured by the continual reflections we ought to make on the weakness of our own wit, and by the experience we have of its illusions, and of those of others: And one of the profitablest things we should do, towards making advantage thereof, would be to keep a Register of all the surprizes we shall have fallen into, by following too lightly its impressions. I say we should have a Register of them, and often refresh it in our memory as an Object from whence we may learn Humility. But our self-love does quite contrary. It blots out of our mind all the Rash Judgments wherein our presumption hath engaged us, and preserves a lively Idea of those, which, though in themselves Rash, have by a piece of Chance-medly prov'd true. We are overjoy'd to say, such an one has not deceived me; I have always found him to be what he is, I could never have a good conceit of him. Whereas we never say to our selves: I was mistaken in such and such occasions; such and such I have thought guilty of certain failours, which I have found to be
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very false. I have slightly in such and such occasions yielded to that impression others would give me, and I have since discovered that I did ill to receive it so easily, without looking for other proofs.

XXIV.

By these and the like means which the desire of mending themselves makes those find out, who are vigorously and sincerely touch'd therewith, we may cure and take away the causes of Rash Judgments : But we ought also to combate them more directly, by applying our selves to discover them by the light of Truth. In this search we shall find, that for the most part there is something of clear and evident in what engages us in an error. But our temerity consists in letting our Judgment over-run our sight, and in not observing that we comprise things therein which we see not, that is, which are not evident.

For Example, we condemn certain actions, because it is evident, that for the most part they are criminal; and we do not take notice that they may be accompanied with some extraordinary circumstance, whereby they become warrantable.

Now

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Now to judge equitably, it suffices not to know Truth as circumscrib'd within certain limits, we must know it in its whole extent. Thus when the question is, whether we ought to condemn some action or other thing, we must demand of our selves, whether this action or thing can by any circumstances become warrantable; and after that, examine not only whether those circumstances effectively are there, but whether we are fully convinc'd they are not there to be found.

For we ought always to have this Maxime in mind, that not to judge; it is sufficient not to be ascertain'd of the fault; whereas to pass sentence nothing ought to be wanting to make up a full evidence.

If we were careful often to put these questions to our selves, we should cut off a great number of Rash Judgments, which remain'd conceal'd from us only, because we will not make reflection thereon.

XXV.

As we often ground our Judgments on general suppositions which are not true, without certain limitations, so also we often conjecture rashly all hidden intentions, supposing that such an exterior action, (wherewith we are offended) did proceed from such a design, whilst we do
not

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not take notice that the same outward action may spring from several different intentions, and that we are not capable of comprehending the infinite number of hidden motions and considerations which might produce it.

Wherefore no Judgments are so palpably rash, as those by which we pretend to dive into the motives and intentions of others; principally when we ascribe that to them which they disavow; and we may even say, that there is in these kinds of Judgments something more injurious to God Almighty than in others, since he hath in a special manner reserv'd to himself the knowledge of the secrets of Hearts, and that he hath granted it neither to Devils, nor even to Angels, according to the Fathers.

XXVI.

It often happens too, that whilst we are not absolutely deceiv'd in condemning certain things, because in reality they are ill; yet we carry our Judgment too far by determining to what degree they are criminal; and this is a manifest rashness. For God alone knows the measure of our faults; there being a thousand things unknown to Men, which either augment or diminish them, Often what we look on

as a great sin, is not so to that height as we believe, since want of knowledge inadvertency, a good intention, the dark mists of some violent temptation may much diminish it before almighty God; and often on the other side those faults we take for peccadillos, appear, and are great in Gods judgment for the ill root from whence they spring.

XXVII.

It is another sort of rash judgment, when we look on certain faults in our neighbour as fix'd and subsistent, though we be not assured that God looks on them as such there, or that they may not be either rooted out by penance, or cur'd by an abundance of charity. For here again we pass beyond the bounds of humane knowledge, and give sentence of what we see not: All that can be said of these persons, in case we are oblig'd to speak of them, is only that they have committed such or such a fault: But that we do not know whether they have repaired it by Penance, by works of Charity, or those other means God furnishes us with to blot out our sins. Thus the judgment we make that such an one is highly guilty, or farther removed from

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Gods favour then another, are rash and unjust.

XXVIII.

For, it ought to be observed that it suffices not to judge for the most part of particular actions, we frame determinate characters of the persons themselves. We look on some as imperfect and contemptible, on others as worth esteem and honour. These, we say, are good for nothing, others we commend as persons of great worth. Now it often happens that nothing is more temerarious then these judgments. For there are some who shew little of what they have in them of good: others in whom more is to be seen then they have. There are some whose faults are more visible and offensive to others, who for all that have a ground-work of right and equity, and a fixture to their essential duties, which sustain and hold them up in important occasions. There are others on the contrary, who being guilty of few exterior faults have a certain defect of solid reason and knowledge, and are guided by certain secret interests unknown to themselves, which in emergencies of consequence produce great disorders. Only God can discover these different tempers: But for men, the more they
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are in this particular to acknowledge their ignorance and blindness, the more ought they to be reserv'd in the comparisons they make of persons, and in the judgments they frame on the view of their particular actions.

XXIX.

If it be a matter of difficulty to shun rash judgments when we are witnesses ourselves of what we sentence, and that we ground our selves on our own proper knowledge; it shall yet be much more difficult, when we build on the testimony and knowledge of others. For besides that, then our evidence is much less, we take a greater liberty to judge; as if the sin were only to be charg'd on him who judges first, and communicates his thoughts to others: Mean while it is not so. The reports made us of our neighbour seem only for signs, by which we ought to frame our judgments. Of these signs some are certain, others not so; and as we may relie on those, we have a right to take for certain, so also is it to judge rashly, to build on such as are uncertain.

XXX.

Not only some reports are uncertain, but almost all are so, and when we found

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things to the bottom, we seldom fail of finding more or less then what is told, Passion and want of evenness in judging, almost alwayes disguise or change truth in those discourses which men make concerning one another. Those who seem to be most sincere and without the least suspicion of imposture, or lying, deceive us sometimes, because often they first deceive themselves. Some there are who will give you their reflections and judgements as matters of fact, and who making no distinction betwixt what effectively has happen'd, and their own deductions, out of both these make up the body of their stories. Thus we can almost build nothing of certainty on the reports of others; and as it is a rashness to ground ones judgements on things uncertain; and since most relations are such, it follows that the greatest part of judgements grounded thereon, are rash and unjust.

XXXI,

It seems concludable from hence, that men are to be believ'd in nothing, and that we ought to examine every thing our selves when we cannot abstain from judging. Yet it is evident, that the commerce of life, and the society amongst men,
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permits not this. There is a necessity of grounding an infinite number of things on the relation of men, and those of the greatest moment; even to give sentence thereby very often of life and death. A man is condemned to die upon the deposition of two witnesses. Some are admitted to places in Church and State, some excluded upon the testimonies of others: And these testimonies are only reports, amongst which it cannot be denied, but some are very uncertain. How then is it possible to reconcile the indispensable obligation we have not to judge but upon certain and evident signs, with the necessity of relying often on the reports which one man makes of another.

XXXII.

This difficulty is resolv'd by distinguishing the knowledge sufficient, to act from that which is necessary to frame an absolute judgment of the truth of things. To proceed to action on reports, it suffices that we are oblig'd to act and cannot come to a clearer knowledge of the truth. I am oblig'd to prefer one to such a charge; such an one is presented who has the testimonies of men of worth I know these testimonies are uncertain.

and I look on them as such: But because I have no means of arriving at a greater certainty, this ought to be sufficient to determine me to act, provided I lie under a necessity of acting. And the judgment whereon these kind of actions are grounded, because it is not uncertain, implies nothing else; but that I have got the greatest assurances I could of the merit and worth of him I have chosen.

Thus a Judge passing sentence against one that's accused, judges not rashly, though he should condemn one that is innocent; because he does not absolutely judge that he is guilty, but that he is convicted of being so according to the forms of justice.

Thus an Abbess who excludes out of her Convent some young women upon the testimonies of one who has had the charge of her, judges not rashly; because she judges not absolutely that the maid deserves exclusion, but only that those whom she ought to trust having judg'd so, it is the will of God she should not stay in that Monastery.

XXXIII.

On the same manner we may judge that 'tis no prudence to employ such or such of whom we have heard some disadvantage.

advantageous reports; without judging for all this that these reports are true. It is enough that we do not know they are false, to have a just right to use these precautions.

For we ought to make a great difference betwixt the judgment whereby we absolutely condemn such an one, and the rational precautions we may use about him, without judging.

A full certainly is necessary for an absolute condemnation, but apparent signs and proofs are sufficient motives for warrantable precautions.

I am told for example, that such an one is a cheat, those who told me so are persons of credit. I have no title thereupon to condemn him, to call him cheat, or one of no faith. But I am not forbid to fear engaging interests with him, and to observe him nearer then another were I to deal with him.

The truth is, it is against justice to frame an absolute judgment, that such an one is guilty upon uncertain motives: But it is impossible also to judge him certainly innocent, when the suspicions against him are strong enough, and invalidated by nothing else. Now the reports of such as we believe sincere, hold

the rank of such suspicions; They necessarily therefore bring it into doubt, and being brought thither, we are not forbid to act according to that condition, though in it we are not permitted to pass an absolute sentence.

XXXIV.

This is the course we ought to take in those emergencies where action is necessary, though we want certainties to build upon. But out of such necessity, for the most part little regard is to be had to the relations of others, since few are exactly true; as we every turn might learn by experience, were we careful to observe it. Nay we ought to wish never to incur the obligation of acting on such uncertain grounds. We ought to give the least credit we can to these reports, and alwayes keep our minds in a disposition to receive with joy a contrary impression, in case it happen by some accident we be informed of something that destroys these.

XXXV.

But though the distrust we may conceive on reports made us of our neighbors actions be not absolutely forbid, as I have said, and that it be inevitable and involuntary, yet is it never lawful to acquaint

quaint others with it, because few are so reserv'd as to stop there, and not advance diffidence and distrust even to absolute condemnation; and yet fewer who can refrain from telling the same tale to others in their turn too. Besides this, 'tis a matter of no small difficulty to redress these disadvantageous impressions, as we are oblig'd to do when we come to know clearly their innocence whom we have thus decry'd; and that the minds that have entertain'd those suspicions, continue bent and inclin'd to take in ill part things indifferent of themselves, and to ascribe them to the prejudices we have given them. Wherefore we must have great and solid reasons to build thereon a right of communicating to others those rumours and reports which are not intirely certain, and yet give occasions of suspicions. That a man to whom these discourses are made ought to have a notable concern and interest to be advertiz'd of them. We ought farther to be assur'd of his discretion; and moreover our discourse ought so to be rated with precautions, that we give him not the least ground of framing a steddy and fixt judgment.

Behold here in part what may be said of
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these kind of rash judgments, which cause scruples in devout people, when they perceive they have fallen into them. But there are others which are scarce consider'd at all, though they are as dangerous, and corrupts little less the minds of those to whom they are communicated.

XXXVI.

First we fancy that such rash judgments are to be shun'd which are made of the living, but that the dead are left in prey to the obloquies of men; because their judgments can now do them no harm. But this is most false, as are also the reasons which are brought to give it some colour. Rash judgments are essentially ill, because contrary to Gods truth; and this reason takes place as well for the dead as living. Besides, it is not true, that we are perfectly seperated from him: If that commerce we have here amongst our selves is not at an end with them, yet we cease not to be united to them: they continue to be our brethren and members of the same body, if with God as we ought to presume, and it is so far false that we have more right to condemning because deceas'd, that on the contrary we have much less, since the
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other life is properly that where God exercises his judgment, and where that of men has nothing to do.

XXXVII.

Secondly, not only we are forbid to judge of others, whether alive or dead, because they have their judge, to wit, God almighty; but we are even forbid to judge of our selves in those things wherein we know not our selves. A thousand things of this nature pass within our hearts which we must leave to Gods judgment; because we should only embroile our selves without profit. Should we undertake to discern them, and it is never lawful for us to let our judgments range out of the limits of our knowledge. Betwixt the disposition we ought to have for our selves, and that we should be in for others, there is only this difference, that we should desire to know our selves in all our faults; on the contrary, we should be glad to have nothing to do with judging others; and not to know any thing that might oblige us to condemn them: Only such misis as rise against our wills and we cannot dissipate, ought to hinder us from judging and condemning our selves; whereas on the contrary, nothing but evidence ought to force

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force us to pass sentence against others. But whether we judge of our selves or others, we lie under the same law, of not judging definitively without full assurance, and of paying that respect to Gods truth, reserving to him the judgment of things obscure and uncertain.

XXXVIII.

Thirdly, 'tis ordinarily believ'd that rash judgments are then only to be blam'd when we judge ill of, and condemn others, and we make no scruple of judging rashly in favour, since there is no malice in doing so. But though this fault be of a less size, yet it is one; because it is alwayes contrary to truth and reason. There is a middle betwixt judging ill and judging well, which is not to judge at all; betwixt blameing and praising, which is to do neither. We must know to judge ill; no less is requir'd to judge well or to praise, and thus it is the part of those who have knowledge, to do neither the one or the other.

XXXIX.

Besides that respect and submission which we owe to that eternal law, which obliges us to moderate our words according to our knowledge, and never to

go beyond it; we are farther oblig'd to this reservedness by the concern and interest of our neighbour. For we often do him as much harm by rash praises, as by an ill grounded condemnation: since these unadvised encomiums incites others to imitate those we esteem at this rate, and to believe they cannot do amiss by following their example and their maxims: And this is properly to authorize their faults, and make them contagious.

XL.

We must not think it a small fault to praise a Clergy-man who resides not at his Cure, who gathers Riches, or lives amongst the Pleasures of the World; especially if we praise him in general, and that what we say advantageously of him be not limited to certain particular actions or qualities which deserve it.

It is also a great fault to praise the devotion of a woman, who in cloaths observes not the rules of an exact modesty, who passes away her time at play and other divertisements, and who takes little care of her family. For this is at the same time to deceive those whom we thus praise, because we hereby make them believe that there is nothing blameable in
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their carriage; and these praises contribute to their getting a fond reputation wherewith they feed their vanity; and also those others in whose presence we praise them; since we incline them to think these women are in good condition, and that they are not oblig'd to correct such faults, as are common to both, since they hinder them not from having the essence and approbation of the publick.

XLI.

We must make account, that the world hardly believes that God condemnes what man praises; or if it does, believe it little feels it. Thus to free ourselves from the harm we may do others in praising what God blames, we must endeavour to be exact in praising only what he approves.

LXII.

But the rash judgments, the most unknown to the generality of the world, are those which have for object the rules of conduct and morality. For there is almost no body to be found, who scruples to advance in discourse several judgments of this nature, that is, maxims concerning actions and things good and evil, of which they have no assurance, nor have
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ever examin'd, and yet may often be both very dangerous, and very false.

XLIII.

To comprehend well how great this fault is, and what ill consequences it may have, we must consider that the Law of God by which we ought to regulate our actions, is nothing but that eternal Justice and truth which prescribes all duties to man, and which makes all things good or evil, as it approves or condemns them; and that this justice, and this truth are nothing else but God himself: So that to oppose truth and justice, is to oppose God, and thwart his will. Now this Law and this eternal Justice, to which we ought to bear a conformity, does not only consist in the general precepts of the *Decalogue*, nor only condemn certain gross sins known to all Christians, as Thievery, Murder, False witness: But it comprehends farther all the consequences deduceable from these general precepts, and particularly from that of loving God and our Neighbour: And so it generally forbids all sort of sins whatsoever they be, since there are none that are not contrary thereunto; nay they are only sins for that contrariety.

LXIV.

There are few Christians as I have said, who

who are not acquainted with the *Ten Commandments*, as to certain gross and palpable duties : But there is not one who knows them perfectly as to all the consequences whether mediate or immediate; which may thence be deduc'd. And 'tis in a shallower or deeper penetration into these consequences that those different degrees of light and knowledge which we find in Christians principally consists.

Now we must know that when they are ignorant of some of these consequences, and that this ignorance causes them to do amiss, they are not therefore excusable, nor exempt from fault; since this ignorance has its rise from concupiscence which keeps these consequences hid, and from the little care they have to beg of God that light which is necessary to discover and make them know their duties; lastly it comes from the small desire they have to get out of this ignorance, from the love they bear to it; and their being often glad not to know those Laws they have no desire to keep.

Were our hearts clean and pure, the Law of God would be all lightsome to us; that purity would make day in every corner, and we should see in every occurrence what God expects of us. If therefore.

fore we see it not, 'tis the impurity of our hearts that blinds and casts these mists about us.

It is therefore certain that this ignorance is no excuse for those sins we commit against the Law of God even in those most hidden consequences; though they are more or less enormous as these consequences are more or less immediate, clearer or obscurer: As it is more or less easie to get instructions; or lastly as this ignorance is more or less voluntary.

XLV.

And as we contract a guilt by the least deeds opposite to the will of God, so is this guilt great when we attack and set our selves against it directly, by maintaining maxims quite opposite thereunto. For this Law being truth and God himself, we combat God and truth when we combat it: and it is as far from possible that should ever be innocent; as it is impossible God should ever approve it: because that were to disown himself.

Nevertheless did we examine the discourses of men, we should find them full fraught with maxims contrary to the law of God. Carnal Christians oppose it in clear and evident consequences; and some even, of those who would pass for virtuous.

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ous and devout ones, often oppose it in those that are obscure and farther fetch't. In fine, there's scarce any who does not measure law by the ell of his own understanding, and condemn what he dislikes or comprehends not.

XLVI.

For example, how many are there professing themselves Catholicks, who not content to blame the vices of Religious persons, utterly condemn the life it self, as a life of idle and useless people. To what end, say they, should there be a sort of folk busy'd about singing, without doing any thing for the benefit of others? In saying so, they condemn a kind of life which the spirit of God has inspir'd, which the Church of God has approv'd, and which is most conformable to the condition of man in this world. They therefore directly contradict the truth of God, and so fall into a most false and most temerarious judgment.

XLVII.

There are others who in general condemn great austerities, and look on the practicers thereof as people without wit and beside themselves: Thus they condemn the very principles of religion, which obliges man to a continual penance

nance, and leads him to repair his faults by severely punishing them in this world.

How much of this same mixes it self in the discourses of Maximes of interest, contrary to the Rules which the Law of God prescribes, should be observ'd in undertaking of all charges, and principally Ecclesiastical ones.

XLVIII.

It is true, that those who make particular profession of Piety, fall not into these gross faults; but they often observe not that they fall into others, which cease not to be of a great consequence.

They make God act according to their fancy, as if his Justice and Mercy were at their dispose. God will forgive these kind of sins, say they; he will not impute such and such faults; to repair such and such crimes, such and such exercises will suffice. They limit Vertue to what they know of it; as if Gods Law could go no farther than their petty light and knowledge. They talk of the ways of conducting Souls, as if they were acquainted with all the Rules; these they approve, those they condemn. They tell you, that the conduct of certain directions is too severe; They praise the sweetness and indulgence of others; They put Men in Peace, with.

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without knowing whether they have any ground to be in Peace, and give assurances which God gives not. They, without consulting any, or farther examining, decide a World of Cases touching ordinary conduct, by the first glimpses which strike their Eye. Who sees not that all this is full of temerity, and by consequence unwarrantable.

XLIX.

The ordinary excuse of those who do thus, is, that they are not appointed to teach others, that they speak what they think, that if one would speak so exactly, he must say nothing at all; for the rest that none has any deference for their sentiments, and so they are not responsible for them.

But how vain and frivolous are these excuses! For it is so far from being more lawful to propose false Maximes, because one is not appointed to teach others; that on the contrary, as those in this condition have less obligation to speak, so have they less excuse when they speak rashly. Those who are in place where they are oblig'd to judge of several things, may plead the necessity of their employment for excuse, if some time there slips from them some unadvised decision: But those who
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are not, ought to be so much the more exact in speaking according to truth, as to have a continual attention over their own thoughts and words.

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Nor is it true, that this exactness goes so far, that its observation will bring us to say nothing. It only consists in proposing nothing for true, but what we are assur'd is so, to hold our peace about things we either know not, or have not examined, or at least to propose our sentiments by way of doubt, rather to inform our selves, than to instruct others. Now there is nothing very troublesome in this practice, nay it becomes easie as we prove faithful therein; for by often examining the Maximes we propose, we become more steady in those that are certain, we discharge our selves of those that are not so, and we learn to propose both the one and the other according to that degree of certainty that they have, and we have of them.

LI.

Lastly, it is utterly false, that Maximes against Truth propos'd by such as are not in authority do others no harm, and that the proposers are not responsible for them.

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For all falsties whatever are capable of doing hurt, and principally such as concern manners, and are the Principles and Rules of Action. There's no error, which proposed, makes not an impression on the mind, when not perceived. It there finds approbation; and those who have so received it, are thereby more dispos'd to follow it in their actions: And, as actions are link'd together, and Clouds draw Clouds after them; let the fault be never so little, it may become the Principle and Source of many others.

LII.

A Vertuous Man fully possess'd with the love of Truth, and fearful of wounding it, ought to carry farther what has been said. For he ought not only to abstain from advancing temerarious propositions in what regards manners, but even in things the most indifferent, in questions purely Philosophical, in Histories, in the judgements he makes of the Eloquence, or the Genius of Authors; in fine, generally in all things where Truth and Falshood may take place, he ought to avoid being rash, and precipitate in judging; because rashness is always against reason, and by accustoming ones self to these kinds of rash designs in things of small importance,

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an evil habit is contracted, which afterward spreads it self even to things where temerity is more dangerous : Whereas honouring Truth in small matters, a disposition is acquir'd of doing the same in greater, and God engaged to bestow that Grace upon us.

LIII.

It is true, that the condition of Man in this life permits us not wholly to avoid all kinds of rashness; yet we are oblig'd to wish and desire we may avoid them, to labour for it, to beg sincerely of God that strength and light necessary for that purpose, to ask pardon for the faults we have made when known by us, and to sigh for those that are hid from us. This Labour, these Prayers, this Vigilance frees us from committing a great number of faults, and obtains pardon for those we commit. But But those who labour not, who watch not, who pray not for this, have not any right to hope the same indulgence from Gods Mercy.

LIV.

We ought not then, from the difficulties we meet with, in the practice of these Truths, take occasion to disown and impugn them : But conclude thence, that since it is so hard to speak as we ought,
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we should speak as little as we can, and when we are obliged thereunto, to be very careful what we say. It is for this the Scripture recommends to Christians silence so earnestly, and that St. *James* says in expresse terms, That we ought to be prompt to hear, and slow to speak. *Sit autem omnis homo velox ad audiendum, tardus autem ad loquendum.* For by hearing we acknowledge both our ignorance of Truth, and our desire of learning it, which is very conformable to the state of Man in this life; whereas by speaking, we profess our selves to know, which few can pretend to without presumption, and which is never without danger.

LV.

Thus the bent and inclination of a Vertuous Man is towards silence as much as possible he can, because the principal light and knowledge of this life consists in being thoroughly acquainted with the depth and greatness of his own ignorance. So that those who make great progresses in humane Sciences, for the most part become peremptory and decisive; on the contrary, the proficients in the Science of God become more reserv'd, more inclin'd to silence, less addicted to their own sense, and less venturesome to judge of others; because

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because they discover more and more how uncertain and obscure our knowledges are, how much we often deceive our selves in the things we think we know best; how many faults and errors we run into by hast, and precipitation in judging, and what disorders are often caused by Rash Judgments and Advices?

LVI.

It was the *Motto* of a Heathen, that the older still he grew, the more he learn'd, *γνέσκω ὅτι ἄτις πολλὰ μὴ εἶδον*. But a Christian, in some sort may take one quite contrary, and say, that as he grows older in the practice of Vertue, he unlearns still many things; that is, he daily more and more discovers that many things which the World boldly propos'd as Truths, and he once with it maintain'd for such, are not only true, but on the contrary very false: And this gives him an extream aversion to that presumptuous decisive deportment, and those numerous rash Maximes, which are proposed ordinarily without mistrust or scruple by such as are ill enlightened.

LVII.

This may be the reason why the Scri-
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ture, representing to us the condition of a man who has born the yoke of our Lord from his youth, and who by that means has encreas'd the grace of innocency by the continual practice of vertues; allots him no other exercise then to be in quiet and to hold his peace. *Beatus homo qui potavit jugum Domini ab adolescentia sua sedebet solitarius & tacebit.* Solitude and silence are the end and recompence whither the increase of piety leads us, and whither we come not but by a whole life of innocency; Since there is only this condition which is conformable to the sentiment, Grace inspires, and the light it gives us.

LVIII.

The more we know God, the more his Law appears to us, profound, admirable, infinite. The more we respect it, the more we fear to offend against it: The more we look with astonishment on the infinite wayes of God, and mans impotency to comprehend them; the more we are perswaded of the weakness and want of knowledge in man, and the more we hate his presumption and boldness. And all these disposes us to speak as little as may be; this is admirably well express'd by the words of a Prophet. *Deus est enim in Calo, & he*
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super terram, id circo sint pauci sermones tui. That is to say, God is in heaven, where he dwells in splendor and light inaccessible to man, we live in earth overwhelmed with darkness and ignorance: And this double knowledge obliges us to few words of what concerns God, *Id circo sint pauci sermones tui.*

LIX.

The more we love *JESUS CHRIST*, the more we respect him in his Brethren, and so we fear the more to hurt them, to condemn or scandalize them by rash judgments or erronius maximes.

These are the genuine motions of Christian Grace, they that feel them not, ought to excite them in themselves, by considering those truths whence they spring, and endeavour to extinguish and quell dayly more and more that inconsiderate presumption which makes them either rashly condemne others, or at a venture propose maximes of Christian morality, they have never examin'd, and which they often ought to believe themselves incapable of examining, because they want sufficient knowledge of the principles they depend on. Let them to day get free of one of their rash judgments, to morrow of another; and by this continu'd progress they will
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at last come to a disposition of reservedness and humility; which will make them with astonishment look back on that humour wherein they spoke at randome of all things; whereof they were insensible, whilst they were in it,

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